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ABSTRACT

A guide for colleges interested in improving the printed information it provides to prospective students is presented, based on the experience of institutions that participated in a three-year effort to improve their informational literature as part of Project CHOICE. CHOICE, the Center for Helping Organizations Improve Choice in Education, was funded from 1977 through 1980 by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. David W. Chapman presents some perspectives on what is better information and what prospective students want to know about a college, and describes national efforts to help colleges revise their printed information. Priscilla J. Angelo presents a model for the process of improving college information. Farrel B. Beres examines the need for improved information on cost and financial aid, while Nina M. Roscher looks at presenting better information on college services and the academic program. Jeanine A. Harrold discusses the need for and presents models of better information describing the educational and employment outcomes of college education. Russell H. Johnson identifies resources that are available to assist institutions in developing better student information and the stage of a campus project at which each resource might be of greatest help. David W. Chapman and John V. Griffith suggest criteria, incorporated in a checklist, on which a college's informational literature can be evaluated. (SW)

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Improving College Information for Prospective Students

Edited by David W. Chapman

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

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PREFACE

Eight years have passed since 1972, when the federal government first termed the postsecondary student a "consumer of education." Six years ago, in 1974, a cluster of federal and state agencies sponsored several conferences on "consumer protection" in postsecondary education. The agencies, responding to reported abuses in federal financial aid programs, proposed that a number of specific information items be given to prospective students as an antidote to hard-sell recruiting tactics. By 1976 many of the information items initially proposed by the Office of Education, the Veterans Administration, and the Federal Trade Commission had been incorporated into laws and regulations governing financial aid.

College and university administrators at first protested the new regulations as costly and educationally irrelevant. Nevertheless, since 1972 colleges have moved from total resistance to the idea that the student is a consumer to cautious experimentation with new types of information for both applicants and enrolled students. Generally, experimental efforts have been based on a view that colleges themselves, rather than federal agencies, have both the responsibility and the expertise to determine what information will be most useful in the college choice process. The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education has provided over one million dollars in seed money since 1975 to encourage development of a variety of information models. Slowly, but increasingly, initiative in developing better information is being taken by colleges.

The Center for Helping Organizations Improve Choice in Education, Project CHOICE, sought to help colleges and universities improve the information they provide to prospective students. Supported by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, Project CHOICE was located in the School of Education at The University of Michigan.

Once colleges began to experiment with new information the advantages became obvious. The institutional reports in this manual cite improved communication on the campus and with employers and alumni. They indicate that curricular revision can be an outcome of examining and generating information that might be provided to prospective students. The authors of the several chapters speak of new self-study data that will enhance long-range planning efforts at their colleges.

Like its predecessor, the National Task Force on Better Information, Project CHOICE endeavored to focus attention on both new information models and the processes to achieve them. CHOICE activities included a slide-tape presentation, national conference sessions, a regular newsletter, a consultant service, and several technical manuals. Despite all this publicity, some college administrators have only recently discovered that improving student information is a potentially useful vehicle for campus improvement. Ideas disseminate slowly in higher education; each institution is receptive to a slightly different approach, depending upon its setting, student body, financial situation, and other issues of concern. Consequently, CHOICE produced varied materials that may have struck a note of response among colleges just becoming aware of the better information movement.

This manual reports, in case study mode, the experiences of diverse colleges that cooperated with CHOICE in experimenting with new information. The manual is less technical than a previous publication, The CHOICE View, and yet it contains several instruments that have been tested and improved on campuses since early efforts at data collection and presentation were reported in Inside Information. Although the colleges that participated in CHOICE activities maintained that the precise types of information useful to students should be unique to a given institution, they made considerable progress in developing techniques for information improvement that can be applied in diverse settings. It is no longer necessary for a college to laboriously construct needs assessment instruments, action plans, or surveys to collect attrition and outcome information. Not only are tested instruments available, but the higher education community has a national network of experienced consultants to assist others in their use.

As a final feature, the colleges reporting their efforts here, in the true spirit of better information advocates, have been candid about the costs to an institution of conducting a drive for information improvement. They have shared time lines and step-by-step suggestions for the process. It takes longer and costs more than one might expect.

We believe this manual will be a useful publication for colleges that are considering joining others in taking the initiative to improve the college choice process.

Joan S. Stark
Dean, School of Education,
Director, Project CHOICE
The University of Michigan

I. IMPROVING COLLEGE INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS: AN INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

David W. Chapman
Associate Director
Project CHOICE
The University of Michigan

Deciding to go to college and choosing the institution to attend are two of the more important decisions an individual makes during his or her schooling. The quality of these decisions often depends on the quality of the information on which they are based. Much of that information has come under sharp criticism in the last few years--from educators, from government, and from the popular press. This attention has prompted many institutions to review and revise the literature they produce for recruitment purposes. However, in this effort, colleges have not always been sure of what students most want to know or of the most effective means of collecting that information. They have often lacked good models of how they might present information to students.

This workbook is for college and university faculty and administrators interested in exploring ways their institution can examine and, if necessary, improve the printed information it provides to prospective students. The content of this workbook is based on the experience of 19 institutions that participated in a three-year effort to improve their informational literature as a part of Project CHOICE. CHOICE, the Center for Helping Organizations Improve Choice in Education, was funded by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) from 1977 through 1980 to help institutions wishing to develop better college information for prospective students.

This book is divided into six chapters. This first chapter will respond to three questions: What is better information? What do prospective students want to know about a college? Do the printed materials a college provides make any difference in students' college choice? It will also describe national efforts to help colleges wishing to revise their printed information.

Chapter II will present a model for the process of improving college information. Changing the way a college describes itself often involves widespread participation, cooperation, and agreement. Gathering and interpreting the information for that new description can have political, interpersonal, and financial consequences. These need to be considered in planning a campus project.

Chapters III through V deal with specific areas of improved information. They are certainly not the only areas that a college may want to consider. Rather, they are chosen because they are important areas in terms of what students say they want to know. These three chapters illustrate both the process of improving information and new ways that colleges are presenting student information. They are written by individuals who have had first-hand experience in improving student information at their own institutions. Specifically, Chapter III examines the need for improved information on cost and financial aid--among the most important issues facing the prospective student and his or her family.

Chapter IV looks at presenting better information on college services and the academic program.

Chapter V discusses the need for and presents models of better information describing the educational and employment outcomes of college education.

Finally, Chapter VI identifies resources that are available to assist institutions in developing better student information and the stage of a campus project at which each resource might be of greatest help.

WHY ARE COLLEGES SEEKING TO IMPROVE THIS INFORMATION?

There are essentially three reasons why colleges have started to re-examine the quality of the material they provide to prospective students. One is the general increase in consumer consciousness. Students increasingly have come to think of themselves as consumers purchasing a service from colleges. Second, the Educational Amendments of 1976 specifically include a section entitled, "Student Consumer Information Provisions," which require and/or recommend that colleges provide information to prospective students in several areas, summarized in Figure 1. Third, for many institutions, numbers of applicants are declining, and the remaining applicants have more college opportunities from which to choose. Many college administrators believe that improving their printed materials may help their institution attract students.

These reasons, taken together, have contributed to widespread activity among colleges to improve their informational literature.

WHAT IS BETTER INFORMATION AND WHAT DO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS WANT TO KNOW?

Better information is more accurate, complete, and usable. It responds to questions students have and is presented in a

FIGURE 1: FEDERAL LAW AND REGULATIONS REQUIRING INSTITUTIONS TO PROVIDE STUDENT CONSUMER INFORMATION

What Federal law requires institutions to provide student consumer information?

Section 493A of Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended by Section 131 of the Education Amendments of 1976.

The Federal Rules and Regulations implementing the law are contained in Chapter I of Title 45 CFR, Section 178.3, entitled Information Dissemination Requirements.

What are the specific requirements?

Institutions must provide to prospective and enrolled students, upon request, the following information:

1. a complete description of all student financial aid programs, including all Title IV programs, state aid programs, and institutional aid programs.
2. a statement of the rights and responsibilities of students receiving aid under Title IV programs.
3. cost of attendance.
4. refund policy.
5. student eligibility.
6. criteria used by the institution to select financial aid recipients and determine award amounts.
7. description of academic programs, including faculty, other instructional personnel, and physical facilities.
8. number and percentage of students who have completed a particular course of study (if figures are available).
9. description of retention rates in terms of each institution's enrollment patterns and types of students.

Each institution must have an employee or a group of employees available on a full-time basis to assist students in obtaining information. However, institutions with small enrollments may apply to the Commissioner of Education for a waiver of this requirement.

Who must comply with these regulations?

All institutions receiving administrative allowances under one or more of the Title IV programs must comply with the regulations.

What agency is responsible for compliance?

Bureau of Student Financial Assistance
Office of Education
U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202

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way that students can understand. Figure 2 lists 10 characteristics of improved college information. The items might be put into two categories. The first five deal mainly with the quality of the information a college presents; the last five are concerned more with the presentation of the information once it is developed. Colleges have often confused improving their information with better promotion. Those concerned with marketing a college or university and/or recruiting students have emphasized the last five items in Figure 2; the emphasis has often been on developing attractive materials and getting them out to the prospective student. In this process, colleges many times have overlooked the first five characteristics in developing their printed materials, those concerned with the quality of the information itself. This workbook addresses this concern for quality in the information colleges provide to prospective students. The emphasis here is on providing information that is practical, accurate, understandable, and that tells students what they want to know.

Figure 3 lists the 20 most important information items that students want to know about college. This list was developed through a survey and interviews with enrolled students, prospective students, their parents, and counselors (Lenning and Cooper, 1977). While this is one of the largest studies of this type, several individual institutions have investigated the types of information students would like to have in making a college choice (Stark, 1978; Chapman and Johnson, 1978). Findings from these studies are notably similar. Students report the most important areas of information are those concerned with instruction and instructors, procedures for and probability of admission, and costs and financial aid. These findings can help a college focus and direct its efforts in organizing a campus information improvement project. Also, these studies can provide examples for college administrators wishing to design such a study for their institution.

THE ROLE OF PRINTED INFORMATION IN STUDENTS' COLLEGE CHOICE

Even if we know what information students say is important, a reasonable question is whether providing that information really makes any difference in their college choice. Given the large amount of informational literature that colleges produce, it is surprising that so little research has ever investigated the influence of these materials on the students' decision. It is one of the first questions, however, that a prudent administrator is apt to ask.

Do printed materials make a difference in students' college choice? Admissions professionals say yes! During 1978-79,

FIGURE 2: TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF BETTER INFORMATION

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1. The information is valued.
2. The information is applicable to the choice or concern.
3. The information is practical.
4. The information is understandable.
5. The information is accurate and reliable.
6. The information is delivered to the appropriate person.
7. The information has attention-getting and motivating form.
8. The information is in a form that facilitates use and application.
9. The information is timely, timed, and sequenced.
10. The information is integrated in both content and form.

From: Lenning, O. and Cooper, E., Guidebook for Colleges and Universities: On Presenting Information to Prospective Students, Boulder, CO: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 1976.

FIGURE 3: TWENTY MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ITEMS

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1. The basis on which students are accepted or rejected for admission to this college.
2. Policy and regulation regarding credit for demonstrated skill, previous education, training and experience.
3. Credit given by other colleges for courses taken at this college (transferability of courses).
4. The typical types and amounts of financial aid given to freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors.
5. The amount of financial aid given to students at different family income levels.
6. Students' description of the general atmosphere at this college (conservative? sports-oriented? academically oriented? strict religious orientation? vocationally-oriented? student centered? and so on).
7. The specific goals and objectives of the college.
8. Availability, cost, and student ratings of different kinds of housing.
9. The availability and extent of general student services (handicapped student services, advising, counseling, health services, placement, library, and so on).
10. The availability and extent of special academic assistance (such as tutoring, additional help from instructors, reading and writing skill development).
11. Opportunities for participation in cultural activities.
12. Opportunities for participation in social activities.
13. Opportunities for participation in recreational activities.
14. Number of students in different courses (class sizes).
15. Descriptions of the instructors (teaching experience, experience outside of teaching, interests, teaching and grading philosophy and methods).
16. Number of freshman courses taught by graduate or undergraduate students.
17. The way classes are taught (lecture, seminars, independent study, laboratory and field work).
18. Student ratings of instructors (how good is the teaching?).
19. Student ratings of instructional facilities and equipment.
20. Information about education taking place primarily outside of the classroom (internships, cooperative education, residence hall programs, field study, and so on).

From: Stark, J.S., Inside Information: A Handbook on Better Information for Student Choice, The American Association for Higher Education, Washington, DC, 1978.

Project CHOICE, in cooperation with the National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC), surveyed over 1,700 college admissions officers and high school guidance counselors (see Chapman *et al.*, 1980; Dominick, *et al.*, 1979). The results of that study indicate:

1. The sending of catalogs to interested prospective students is the single most widely used recruitment activity;

2. It is rated by both college admissions officers and high school guidance counselors to be the single most accurate source of college information for the student;

3. The mailing of catalogs and informational brochures, upon request, is considered by both groups to be among the five admissions practices students rely on most in making a college decision.

4. Colleges expect increasingly to use direct mailing catalogs and brochures to attract students. Nearly all the admissions officers expect to be involved in more aggressive recruiting strategies, but expect to do so from closer to home. A substantial number (in this study), around half, expect to spend more time on campus and make more use of mailing lists to attract prospective students.

A second source of data on the influence of colleges' informational literature is obviously the student. College students report that receiving printed materials from colleges is important, but in a somewhat different way than the admissions professional might expect. In studies conducted at several individual institutions, students indicated they used the printed information from the college primarily to confirm a college choice they had already made on other grounds (Chapman and Johnson, 1979; Prior, 1979). This is more important than it may first appear. Many colleges suffer a substantial loss of students between the time the applicant is admitted and actually arrives on campus. Printed materials may play an important role for the student during that interval.

In summary, admissions professionals regard printed materials as very important in colleges' efforts to attract students and in students' choice of which college to attend. Students report they often used printed information to reinforce a decision made on other grounds. It appears that printed materials do make a difference in student college choice.

RESOURCES FOR IMPROVING INFORMATION

As improved information becomes more important, many colleges are attempting to re-examine and revise their printed materials. However, colleges often have difficulty evaluating materials, identifying areas for improvement, and organizing a campus information improvement project.

To help institutions respond to these issues, the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) supported two national projects on improving college information. The first, the National Task Force on Better Information for Student Choice (1975-1977), identified and refined many of the issues surrounding the need for better information. The task force also developed a variety of examples of better information to serve as models for other institutions undertaking revisions. The second national project was the Center for Helping Institutions Improve Choice in Education, Project CHOICE (1977-1980). This three-year project continued and extended the work of the National Task Force. CHOICE activities were primarily in four areas. First, CHOICE worked closely with 19 colleges and universities that agreed to revise their college information in ways that tested new models of student information. This allowed CHOICE to examine the process of improving campus information, while the participating colleges were able to develop new models of better information. CHOICE investigated the role of recruitment literature in students' college choice; some of its results were reported earlier. Third, CHOICE offered a National Linking Service through which colleges wishing to improve campus information received help from consultants from institutions that had already done so. CHOICE also provided a clearinghouse for information on student consumerism and information models developed by colleges.

More comprehensive and accurate information for students is likely to be fostered through voluntary cooperation among colleges. This workbook is presented in the hope that the improved information processes and models through CHOICE will help other colleges and universities improve their information for prospective students.

II. ORGANIZING A CAMPUS INFORMATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: A PROCESS PLAN

Priscilla J. Angelo
Associate Dean of the College
St. Lawrence University

Much has been written on the reasons for providing better information for prospective students. As with many new projects, "getting started" is the hardest step, but planning helps to direct vision. This chapter presents a "process plan"--a kind of guide--for organizing a campus information improvement project. The discussion is based on the experience of colleagues in the Project CHOICE efforts during 1978-79.

A FEW WORDS OF CAUTION

Before presenting a model to help guide your project design, we offer a few words of caution. Planning is a process; "it is a way of getting from here to there within a specific time frame." The plan presented in the following pages is only a guide. It is not a solution, and it will not guarantee success. It does suggest a process to use when planning a project. However, don't over rely on a plan. In fact, some things cannot be planned. This makes it necessary to continually assess potential problems, preventive actions, and alternative contingency plans.

It is easy to confuse planning with decision making. Throughout your project it is important to ask, "What important decisions affecting the plan have yet to be made?" It's best not to start specific activities until basic decisions have been made. Some of the best laid plans have failed because "getting approval from other people" was overlooked.

In project planning it is easy to mistake action steps with objectives. Action steps achieve objectives. Objectives state a result. If the two are confused, you can be involved in a wide variety of activities that have no clear focus or purpose.

Lastly, organizing a better information project takes time--and a lot of it. It requires diplomatic skill in mediation. Although most people agree with the philosophy of improved information to assist prospective students with their college decisions, the "we've always done it this way" attitude is hard to overcome. The project director is often in a compromising position. Implementing a plan is difficult because of time

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restraints, money, energy, and data collection. Murphy's Law is certainly operative:

> NOTHING IS AS EASY AS IT LOOKS;
> EVERYTHING TAKES LONGER THAN YOU EXPECT;
> IF ANYTHING CAN GO WRONG IT WILL, AND
> AT THE WORST POSSIBLE MOMENT!

STEPS IN DESIGNING A BETTER INFORMATION PROCESS

The literature on organization development is full of planning models to use in organizing a project. Each of the original 19 colleges affiliated with Project CHOICE designed its own plan for implementing an information improvement project. However, in reviewing these designs, some common elements existed:

Step 1: Become familiar with the literature and the meaning of improved information. The University of Michigan Project CHOICE office developed a complete bibliography and clearinghouse service for institutions or individuals wishing written materials on better information. CHOICE also conducted several research studies designed to measure the impact of improved information and to gather data about what information students want, why students leave college, and what outcomes can be attributed to a specific college education. CHOICE also developed a Linking Service to provide consultants to assist a college with a project.* Workshops were held across the country at professional meetings and at specific colleges.

Step 2: Determine the feasibility of completing a better information project on your campus. In analyzing the feasibility of completing a better information project, it may help to write down the assumptions you can make about implementing such a project on your campus. What can you take for granted, or what can you suppose to be true? That is, what factors can you be sure of? List what you view to be supportive resources available to the college in carrying out a better information project. For example, name specific people, budget resources, machinery, technical assistance, research data, and so on. As a counterbalance, it will also be necessary to list resisting forces--constraints. What limitations are there--specific people, time, money, technical experience, and so on. The more specific you can be in

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*For information on the availability of the clearinghouse and Linking Service, write to Project CHOICE, 2001 School of Education, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109.

FIGURE 1: STEPS IN DESIGNING A BETTER INFORMATION PROJECT

Step 1: Become familiar with the literature and the meaning of improved information.

Step 2: Determine the feasibility of completing a better information project on your campus. What assumptions can you make about implementing a better information project on your campus? What supporting resources exist? What resisting forces or constraints exist?

Step 3: Obtain institutional commitment through involving several campus constituencies.

Step 4: Go public! Prepare a statement announcing your anticipated result.

Step 5: Organize tasks to achieve your anticipated result.

Step 6: Evaluate the process.

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analyzing the feasibility of undertaking such a project, the more realistic you will be in defining achievable goals. It may be valuable to discuss your analysis with colleagues at your institution before proceeding. Institutions that have carefully examined their assumptions and designed goals consistent with these assumptions faced fewer disappointments, and energies were used in achievable areas.

Step 3: Obtain institutional commitment through involving several campus constituencies. Endorsement by senior administrators is essential to the success of a better information project. Because improved information affects so many areas of an institution, the president's support is necessary. The director of a better information project must have visible and public presidential support if the project is to succeed. A better information project should be viewed as consistent with the goals of the college and valuable for the institution from a public relations point of view. The colleges involved with the Project CHOICE program consulted with a variety of internal and external resource people to obtain institutional support. The administrative officers most commonly involved worked in admissions, academic affairs, financial aid, institutional research, alumni affairs, and student services. High school guidance counselors and governing boards were also frequently consulted as key resource people. Faculty senates and student government officers were usually excellent supporters. Workshops, information meetings, press releases, and individual conversations were most frequently used to convey information about improved information projects. Involving others by seeking their opinion also made colleagues more aware of the need for improved information. Because they understood the project's mission, they were especially cooperative in later months when asked to help collect data. Involving others by seeking their opinion and getting presidential support are the most important steps in this total process.

Step 4: Go public! Prepare a statement announcing your anticipated results. Once you have achieved institutional commitment in launching a better information project, Step 4 is easy. Professional planners refer to this step as "establishing a statement of your planning situation." What is the overall result you wish to achieve? What are the target dates for beginning and completing the project? We advocate a public declaration because it's human nature to complete what we state publicly we will do. Your statement can be presented in very broad terms, such as: to provide better information on academic programs for nontraditional students by May 1980.

Step 5: Organize tasks to achieve your anticipated results. Frequently, project planners omit the first four steps and enter the planning process by organizing tasks to achieve anticipated results. This is a mistake, since the first four steps are important ground work for Step 5. Step 5 includes a number of activities, as illustrated by Figure 2.

A variety of committee or team structures proved successful when organizing projects to carry out better information projects. Teams were usually comprised of middle management administrators from institutional research, admissions, and student affairs. A few colleges had project directors from academic affairs, and one liberal arts college included a faculty member on its project team. Most colleges reported that a three-person team was a good-sized work committee, although most colleges involved a resource support group serving in an advisory capacity. The team members' position in the institution appeared to be less significant than their personal influence with senior officers at the institution. Personal characteristics of team members included high energy levels, creativity, and the ability to deal with ambiguity. Individuals respected by their peers and those able to mediate differences of opinion were especially effective team members. The advisory committee was sometimes a campus standing committee, a newly formed advisory group, or a combination of the above. An effective model was to assign specific activities to a working task force; in this way multiple groups could be at work on separate projects.

Evaluating the current flow and quality of information to prospective students is a critical task to complete before determining specific objectives. Through research studies completed by the National Task Force on Better Information for Student Choice, we know that prospective students want improved information in these areas: prospects for admission, cost and financial aid, college services and academic programs, outcomes of an education, and student completion rates. A checklist appears in Chapter VII of this book to help a college evaluate its current information and to assess the effectiveness of its information delivery systems. With the results of this self study, the project team can then rank order specific objectives for its information improvement project.

In designing objectives, list the specific results you wish to achieve. Express these objectives by using an action verb, such as "to establish," "to maximize," "to minimize," and so on. The objectives should be measurable and quantifiable when possible. Include both long-range and short-range objectives. We urge you to rank order the objectives in order to focus on items that are most critical for the institution. And remember, things usually take longer to accomplish than we realize. So be realistic by designing objectives consistent with the assumptions, resources, and constraints listed in Step 2.

FIGURE 2: ORGANIZING TASKS TO ACHIEVE ANTICIPATED RESULTS

Action Steps	Assign Tasks - Whose Responsibility	Prepare A Budget	Prepare a Timetable
Develop a project structure			
Complete a needs assessment to identify gaps in information			
Design objectives			
Compile new information			
Develop new materials			
Field test new materials			
Revise materials			
Produce and distribute materials			

Once specific objectives have been clarified, new information can be compiled. This activity usually takes the longest to accomplish because research data is often unavailable. Survey instruments were designed by Project CHOICE in the area of outcomes and attrition. Other instruments are available for purchase through the Educational Testing Service and other professional organizations. These instruments have been tested for validity and might save time in compiling research data about a college.

Developing new materials is often time consuming. Content must be agreed upon and layout and graphics planned. Writing a brochure by committee is time consuming; yet to have one editor prepare the document may give one individual too much license. Each approach has its merits. Our experience shows that project directors must insist that a timetable be adhered to or new material will be redrafted too many times.

Although editors resist field testing draft material, this step is important to develop better information. Prospective students in the local area and current college students make good readers. A checklist of evaluation criteria is a good tool for the reader, and it provides concrete information for the editor. After revisions based on field tests, the materials are produced and distributed.

As Figure 2 shows, a team member should be assigned the responsibility for each of the action steps. Budget consideration should be given to each action step as well. Developing a realistic timetable is a chief responsibility of the team in order to ensure progress. Be sure to allow adequate time, and be sure your deadlines are realistic. Some colleges may wish to develop a bar graph or PERT chart to mark their time line. The Project CHOICE colleges found that at least two years were necessary to complete a comprehensive better information project.

Step 6: Evaluate the process. Throughout the project an evaluation of the process must be conscientiously built in, as Figure 2 shows. The team must consider potential problems, preventive actions, and contingency steps. The next chapter in this workbook addresses some of the problems encountered by the colleges that participated in Project CHOICE. Unless you have a flexible design that includes constant evaluation, participation in a better information project can be frustrating and unproductive.

Organizing and designing a better information process might be better understood if applied to a real situation. In the section that follows, we present a case study of one of the Project CHOICE participants, St. Lawrence University.

A CASE STUDY: ST. LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY

St. Lawrence University is a residential undergraduate liberal arts college in upstate New York. It has been coeducational since its founding in 1856. The undergraduate enrollment is approximately 2,600 students, with more than 80 percent of its students graduating within four years. St. Lawrence was selected as one of the original 19 colleges to be involved in the Project CHOICE program.

St. Lawrence became involved in the better information project "at a time of strength." The campus has continually been over-enrolled and the college budget has been balanced for over 35 years. From the beginning, the project had full endorsement by the board of trustees and the president.

The administration first learned of Project CHOICE by accident. As a part of the St. Lawrence professional development program, Joan Stark, then chairperson of the Department of Higher Education at Syracuse University, was invited to the college for a one-day workshop on student consumerism. The issue of "fair practice legislation" had recently emerged, and Dr. Stark discussed a grant she had just received from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to help colleges design better information programs.

After the workshop, one of the administrators attending began to think about applying Project CHOICE to St. Lawrence. The objectives of better information were consistent with the goals of St. Lawrence and the timing seemed right. St. Lawrence had just completed its self-evaluation for a future Middle States team visit; a five-year master plan outlined the specific goals of the college; a capital budget for a new film and other written admissions materials had been approved. Excellent outcome data were available, but they had not been used in prospective student publications. Faculty and administrative colleagues, the faculty council, and the student senate were asked their opinions about involvement with Project CHOICE. Almost all supported the concept of a better information project.

However, a few potential problems existed. There was no central institutional research officer at the college, and data were very decentralized. This would mean that a better information project would take the time of several people. Other technical expertise did not exist. For example, a graphics consultant might be needed, and additional budget expenditures were unlikely. The better information concept was new to public relations, and this would require a new framework for thinking and writing about the college. Lastly, a few key senior officers felt the project might overcommit the administrative staff, given its already heavy responsibilities. However, the president was most supportive of St. Lawrence's involvement and was highly confident in Joan Stark. Application to participate in Project CHOICE was made by Priscilla Angelo, then associate director of student services.

The purpose of St. Lawrence's involvement in Project CHOICE as stated in the application was "to improve information for prospective students by September 1979."

A Project CHOICE team was organized to include a senior member of the English Department. It was a coincidence that this faculty member was serving as chapter president of the American Association of University Professors and had children enrolled in college and in the process of applying to college. This faculty member's personal interest and expertise as a parent were most valuable. The director of public relations was also invited to serve as a team member because of his expertise in producing new materials. The project team director had experience in planning and a research interest in federal regulations. The director of admissions and a student intern served as ex officio members. This better information project took approximately 15 percent of the project director's work time. The group met weekly to work on activities.

The Project CHOICE team participated in a dissemination conference near Chicago during the summer of 1978. During this five-day period, a careful analysis of SLU materials for prospective students took place to identify gaps in important information for students.

Three basic objectives emerged as a result of this study:

1. To increase the awareness of campus constituencies of the need for improved information.

2. To develop a written brochure regarding college outcomes.

3. To prepare a series of brochures regarding academic programs.

A timetable, a budget, and divisions of responsibility were also determined. Through the year other research was conducted. For example, a student undertook a January research project to collect data from high school counselors. Another student, interested in higher education administration, volunteered to work as an intern, and she served as an excellent research assistant during the first year of the project.

It was felt that each team member should take primary responsibility for one part of the project; a three-to-five-person work group was involved to complete most tasks.

Several awareness programs were held for campus constituencies to inform them of St. Lawrence's objectives and involvement in Project CHOICE. The first seminar was with the board of trustees at its July retreat. A full morning was devoted to the better information movement by bringing a special consultant to discuss this national issue. Other forums were held on the campus with secretaries, the student senate, the new film committee, the academic department chairs, and the administration. The campus newspaper and the freshman orientation board were very cooperative in preparing articles for their respective audiences.

It was decided that eight new printed materials should be developed. Compiling new information was a relatively easy task because St. Lawrence had so much data collected in preparation for its Middle States self-evaluation study. However, drafting new materials is time consuming. No new staff members were hired to work on this project. Although most agreed that materials were considered "university documents," some offices became possessive of the content material and some confusion resulted regarding "who" made final decisions regarding content and layout. Most written materials were field tested by giving them to college students, high school students, and appropriate administrators and faculty members for review. A checklist was prepared of criteria to use when reviewing the new academic brochures. The Project CHOICE team critiqued each document before it was printed; however, the public relations office had final authority and took final responsibility for publication.

The St. Lawrence Project CHOICE team faithfully evaluated its work. Each semester a written report was prepared and distributed on the campus and an article was written for the college newspaper to update the project's progress. At each meeting of the board of trustees, the president briefed the trustees about the project to keep them well informed.

The St. Lawrence University better information project far exceeded the team's original expectations. The awareness programs held on the campus early in the project had cumulative effects as time went on. Academic departments discussed better information objectives in producing new catalog materials and student advisement materials. A secretaries' in-service program began in order to keep secretaries better informed on campus issues. The student government became interested in better information for enrolled students and helped review the annual catalog. Better information and Project CHOICE activities sometimes "got used" as an excuse for accomplishing other things. For example, funds were made available for publication of a new "personal educational profile" that the admissions office had designed in earlier years.

The better information team feels that this project worked successfully at St. Lawrence due to five predominant factors. First, the better information project fit within the goals and financial priorities of the college. Second, the project had institutional support from the board of trustees and the president. Also, the team worked cooperatively and made a commitment to work together at least one and a half hours each week. The project was organized as an entity, separate from any political committee structure. Several small task forces were organized to accomplish many items at the same time. Lastly, the project was carefully planned and organized.

Sometimes things did not happen as planned. Everything took more time than expected. Some academic brochures were one year away from completion due to a lack of time and consensus on content area. And everything cost more than you might expect.

The Project CHOICE team feels that St. Lawrence University's involvement in this better information project was worthwhile. It helped St. Lawrence to evaluate and to develop a new information system for prospective students. It caused administrative offices to work together in new ways, and it improved inner-office communication among those involved. And it resulted in several new written materials and a new film. However, the greatest benefit in this new "thought process" was a renewed confidence in the college!

A WORKSHEET DESIGN: ST. LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY

The Worksheet Design that follows may help to illustrate the six-step model presented in this chapter and in the case study above. We do not guarantee success, but we believe that planning helps visions come true.

Step 1: Become familiar with better information literature.

  A. Professional development seminar for SLU administrators (one day) on student consumerism, December 1977.

  B. Project CHOICE team attends workshop (five days), June 1978.

Step 2: Determine feasibility of completing a better information project.

A. Assumptions

1. Developing better information is compatible with the goals and objectives of the university.
2. Senior leadership supports this project.
3. More can be accomplished if the project is not political.
4. A three-person team should be structured with people involved who understand the institution as a total organization.
5. More could be accomplished if several small work groups (task forces) were involved.
6. The project could be carried out using current people and financial resources.
7. Involvement in a project is a professional development opportunity for those involved.

B. Resources

1. The timing is good
    a. The master plan has been completed.
    b. Middle States self-evaluation has been completed.
    c. It is a time of strength; we are over-enrolled.
    d. Capital budget has been approved for a film and new materials.
    e. Data collection has been done on outcomes.
2. Talented team
3. Presidential support

4. Constraints

   a. Data collection is not centralized.

   b. No technicians and graphics experts on the staff.

   c. Budget limitations.

   d. Two vice presidents concerned about staff time.

   e. A new concept for public relations.

Step 3: Obtain institutional commitment through involving other constituencies.

A. Professional development seminar (one day), December 1977.

B. Asked faculty council, senior administrators, student leaders, and student affairs advice on preparing a proposal (March 1978).

Step 4: Develop a statement outlining a general plan.

Step 5: Organized Activities.

Activities	Time	Whose Responsibility	Cost
A. Team structure 1. Project Director (Associate Director of Student Services who then became Associate Dean of the college)	three hours, March 1978	President's	People Time
2. Public Relations Director			
3. Faculty member			
B. Do a needs assessment to identify gaps in information 1. Team attends dissemination workshop	five days, June 1978	Team	People Time

C. Design objectives

1. To increase awareness on campus regarding the need to improve information for prospective students	June - December 1978	Full team	People Time
2. To develop written brochure regarding outcomes	Spring 1979	The outcomes task force	$1,500
3. To prepare a series of brochures regarding academic programs	Spring 1979-80	Academic chairpersons	$300 each

D. Time Line

Time Line	Fall 1977	Spring 1978	Summer 1978	Fall 1978	Spring 1979	Summer 1979	Fall 1979	Spring 1980	Summer 1980
Activities									
I) Become familiar with the better information literature	X								
II) Project Structure									
Feasibility Study		X							
Obtain institutional commitment		X							
Establish a general goal		X							
Set up a team			X						
Analysis needs			X						
Establish objectives			X						
Prepare a time line			X						
Information workshops			X	X					
Make team assignments			X				X		
Prepare budget			X				X		
III) Develop materials for prospective students									
New data collected				X	X	X			
New materials drafted					X	X	X		
New materials field tested					X	X	X		
New materials produced						X	X	X	
New materials distributed								X	
IV) Develop materials for enrolled students							X	X	X
V) Evaluate process	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

E. Compile information			
1. Outcomes brochure	Spring 1979	Outcomes task force	$1,200
2. Academic brochures	Spring 1979	Team and department chairs	People time
a. Design a model to present to department chairs			
b. Develop a checklist with criteria for evaluating new materials.			
F. Draft of new materials	Spring 1979-Fall 1979	Team and several task forces	People time
1. What do you want this new piece to do?			
2. Design a marketing strategy			
3. Work on layout designs			
4. Hire a graphics consultant			
5. Select paper, colors, typeset, and so on			
6. Redraft, redraft, redraft, and so on			
G. Field test new materials	Spring-Fall 1979	Project director	People time
1. Use college student readers, high school readers, appropriate faculty and staff			
2. Revise			
H. Print and distribute	Summer 1979-1980	Public relations	

1. New materials out for bid			
2. Select printer			
3. Design a marketing strategy			
Step 6: Evaluate			
A. Establish benchmarks each semester for evaluation	Each semester	Team	People time
B. Prepare written reports	two hours	Chair	

This chapter has focused on how to organize a campus information improvement project, with specific examples to illustrate a six-step planning model. Each college must develop a design appropriate to its own setting. The success of a project will rest on that design.

III. IMPROVING INFORMATION ON COSTS AND FINANCIAL AID

Farrel B. Beres
Director of Special Projects
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How much does it cost? Can I afford it? How can I get financial aid? These are among the most important questions a student asks in deciding to go to college and in selecting a college to attend. Yet the area of costs and financial aid is frequently one of confusion and misunderstanding. With college costs so high, the failure of students or their parents to clearly understand those costs and available aid can have severe financial consequences for a family. Likewise, inadequate information can have serious effects on a college if enrollments drop because students believe they can not afford the education.

In spite of the wide recognition given to the importance of good financial aid information, students report they often fail to receive the information they need. Students frequently report they did not know about the availability of financial assistance, about which application forms to use or how to complete them, about application deadlines, about how to integrate information from various offices, or about how borrowing would obligate their future. Indeed, those who are the most needy are often the least likely to have information about ways to meet college costs. They are also the least likely to overcome the hurdles associated with applying for and receiving aid.

This chapter examines what previous research and experience indicate students want to know about costs and financial aid. It examines the process by which an institution can re-examine and, if necessary, improve its printed financial aid materials. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first describes the elements of information that students want colleges to share. Section B shows how a number of institutions have presented that information. Section C describes how one institution undertook a campus project to develop better financial aid information.

A. INFORMATION ON COSTS AND FINANCIAL AID THAT STUDENTS NEED TO HAVE

Considerable research has investigated what information students want to have about college (Stark, 1977, 1978; Lenning and Cooper, 1977; Chapman and Johnson, 1979). Not surprisingly, these studies tend to yield similar results. Given this consistency, colleges wishing to improve their information should review research findings already available that identify what students need to know about financial aid.

Studies suggest that students want very detailed information about financial aid and how to apply for it. At the same time, they want more general information about costs. That is, they want to see the various fees and charges totaled so they can get an overall sense of the financial commitment they are undertaking. Although information needs vary among different audiences (transfers, minorities, adults, graduates, and so on), there is consensus about the specific information students need. Figure 1 reports items that are critical to the students' college decision. In addition to the items in Figure 1, Project CHOICE recommended using the truth-in-aiding statement developed under the direction of the College Scholarship Service. This provides a basic framework for relating key information about budgets, comparative costs across colleges, programs and awarding practices, and other policies and procedures of the financial aid office. An example of this statement appears in this chapter.

CHOICE further encouraged institutions to develop:

1. A guide describing the student's options and responsibilities in accepting financial aid;
2. Glossaries of financial aid terms;
3. Explanations of a college's particular system of aid awards;
4. Financial aid checklists and calendars to help students make sure they've completed all application procedures;
5. Lists of special problems or circumstances the student should be aware of.

Additional information that an institution should consider providing is suggested in Chapter VII of this book.

B. PRESENTING COST AND AID INFORMATION TO THE STUDENT

Costs

Colleges, in explaining the costs of education, often report information in ways that make it difficult to compare the various student budgets from one college to the next. Likewise, there is often little indication of how student budgets

FIGURE 1: INFORMATION ELEMENTS ON COSTS AND FINANCIAL AID THAT SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Cost Information	Aid Information
Total cost to complete the program	Location of aid office and information contacts
Cost for one semester and one year	How aid is disbursed and frequency
Cost breakdown by expense category	How need is determined
How and when costs are paid	Detailed description of aid programs
Options for paying school bills	General information about aid available and awarding policies
Probability of cost changes from year to year	Amount and type of aid given to students at different income and need levels
Net cost of education paid from family resources	Aid application deadlines
A way to compare costs at different institutions	Specific application procedures (forms, timetables)
Refund policies	Detailed information about available jobs and conditions of employment
	Percentage of students who work during the school year and their average earnings
	Detailed information about loan repayment
	Rights and responsibilities of aid recipients
	Percentage of entering students who apply for aid and receive it

STUDENT FINANCIAL AID
Statement of Cost and Policy
1975-76 Academic Year

(Insert the Name of the Institution)

I. STUDENT EXPENSE BUDGETS: The following budgets are those typically used to calculate the financial need of students with the characteristics indicated below. Other typical budgets can be obtained from the office listed at the bottom of this statement. Adjustments to these typical budgets are made to reflect special needs of different individual students.

	SINGLE STUDENTS LIVING AT Home	ON Campus	OFF Campus	MARRIED STUDENTS No Children	Additional Each Child
Number of months covered by budget	N/A	9	9	9	1
Tuition and fees	$	$ 700	$ 700	$ 700	
Books and supplies	$	$ 200	$ 200	$ 200	
Room and board	$	$ 1430	$ 1430	$ 4110	$ 900
Transportation	$	$ 120	$ 120	$ 120	$
Personal and miscellaneous expenses	$	$ 516	$ 516	$ 516	$
TOTAL ESTIMATED BUDGET	$	$ 2966	$ 2966	$ 5696	$

II. AID RECEIVED BY STUDENTS: The following information describes the way in which financial aid (from all sources) was awarded to undergraduate students last year. It is provided as an indication of institutional practices with the understanding that individual awards vary according to need and that changes in funding levels may influence awards in subsequent years.

The number of full-time undergraduates in 1975-76 was 25,250 (1)

The number and percent of that group receiving some form of aid was 15,500 61.5 %

	DEPENDENT STUDENTS FROM FAMILIES WITH INCOMES Under $9,000	$9,000- $15,000	$15,000- $21,000	$21,000- $27,000	$27,000 and Above	INDEPENDENT STUDENTS Single	Married
Estimated % of full-time undergraduate students	9%	18%	27%	14%	25%	5 %	2%
% of aid recipients	16%	25%	25%	13%	5%	11 %	5%
Average expense budget	$ 3213	$ 3279	$ 3456	$ 3310	$ 3364	$ 4125	$ 5883
% receiving any grant	36 %	24 %	13%	9%	1%	29 %	30%
Average grant	$ 694	$ 414	$ 192	$ 127	$ 95	$ 525	$ 493
% receiving any loan	21 %	13%	7%	5%	1%	24 %	21%
Average loan	$ 716	$ 646	$ 787	$ 969	$ 1101	$ 958	$ 1130
% receiving work aid	11%	6 %	2%	1%	0.5%	11 %	10%
Average work income	$ 835	$ 526	$ 492	$ 457	$ 203	$ 668	$ 728
AVERAGE TOTAL AID	$ 2065	$ 1453	$ 900	$ 653	$ 512	$ 1547	$ 1339
AVERAGE NET COST TO STUDENT AND PARENT	$ 1148	$ 1826	$ 2556	$ 2657	$ 2852	$ 2578	$ 4544

Additional information about student expense budgets and aid received by students can be obtained from the financial aid office at the address or telephone number shown here.

(specific location of aid office)

(area code, telephone number, ext.)

III. AID PROGRAMS AND POLICIES: The following information describes this institution's policies in awarding aid to undergraduate students.

In order to receive aid, a student must enroll for 12 credit units each semester.

Recipients must complete ____ credit units each academic year in order to remain eligible.

The minimum grade-point average required for selection is ____ for students entering from high school, ____ for students transferring from another postsecondary institution, and ____ for students applying for renewal of aid at this institution.

In order to be considered to have a complete application for aid, a student must complete the following steps:

1. Be admitted to the University.
2. Receive a decision from Basic Grant (institution notified).
3. Illinois residents - must complete application (institution notified).
4. Complete and submit institutional financial aid application.
5. Submission of financial statement from parents.

The deadlines for consideration for aid are:

March 15 - priority

October 15 - final deadline

This institution's policy concerning no-need scholarships (gift assistance to students who do not have any financial need) is:

A limited number of no-need scholarships are available through academic departments. These average about $300 per year. Applications should be made through the respective departments.

The institutional policy for packaging grant, loan, and employment aid for students is:

Applicants are offered financial aid packages composed of grants, loans, and employment. Composition of the package is dependent upon class level, academic performance, no program eligibility, special program involvement, and funds available. These vary and are not in hierarchial order.

Additional information that aid applicants may find helpful in understanding costs and aid at this institution (optional):

(1) The tables in Section II do not reflect over 6000 students employed by the University on whom we have no family financial data. It is assumed that these students are similar to aid recipients in family income.

(2) There is no minimum number of hours a student must complete to maintain eligibility, however, a student must be academically eligible to re-enroll in order to be eligible for financial aid.

(3) As long as a student is admitted to the University, he/she is eligible to apply for financial aid.

are used by the financial aid office. Cost information, as it is sometimes presented, can raise more questions than it answers:

> Do students have control over any costs?
>
> Do all schools recognize different costs depending on your living situation?
>
> Do expenses vary from year to year?
>
> Does the financial aid office adjust budgets for special circumstances?
>
> How much does it cost to complete a program?

Many colleges are developing cost information that responds to these problems. These new presentations of college costs provide a variety of sample budgets, spell out costs for specific categories of items, and identify the applicable budget year, source of data, and treatment of exceptions. Several examples of well-presented information help illustrate the point.

Eligibility for Aid

Students have a primary interest in knowing how aid is determined so that they can predict their chances of qualifying for aid before they apply for admission. They want to know whether it is worth their time to apply. Students want to know what kinds of funds will be received, how much money they may have to borrow, and how many hours they'll have to work throughout their college career. Here are some examples of information that respond to these financial concerns about college.

RATIONING TIME

BUDGETS

College has a diverse student population, which means that people have different economic lifestyles and obligations. The budgets used by the Financial Aid Office are expressions of average costs for the student population; they are intended to provide sufficient funds for most students in most circumstances. These budgets are not and cannot be intended to meet each person's full financial responsibilities. If you come to College relatively free of past obligations, these budgets should provide a sufficient economic base for you to survive financially and attend school.

Since one purpose of the budgets is to fairly distribute the available dollars among all eligible students, it is impossible to take into account all of the situations in which people find themselves or all of the consumer choices they make. People make their own budget decisions about what is most important to them. They may choose to share a lower rent apartment in order to have a car, or they may choose to live alone within biking distance of campus. The choices are there for each individual. Economical consumer choices are generally reflected in the awarding of aid.

Please look at the budgets that follow. They reflect the planned budgets for the 1978-79 academic year.

	Single living at home	Single living away from home	Married	Single Parent and Child
Fees	$ 30	$ 30	$ 30	$ 30
Books & Supplies	210	210	210	210
Food & Housing	850	2,300	4,190	3,600
Personal Expenses	400	575	850	800
Transportation	400	550	600	600
TOTAL	$1,890	$3,665	$5,880	$5,240

Additional allowances will be made if you have children, or if you will be paying out-of-state tuition. Information on College's tuition refund policy can be found in the school's catalog. Other emergency car, medical or school related costs may be considered by submitting a Request for Budget Exception with the required documentation. Dental Assisting, Nursing, Respiratory Therapy and Biomedical Technology students are given an additional $100 allowance for extra expenses for the first year only.

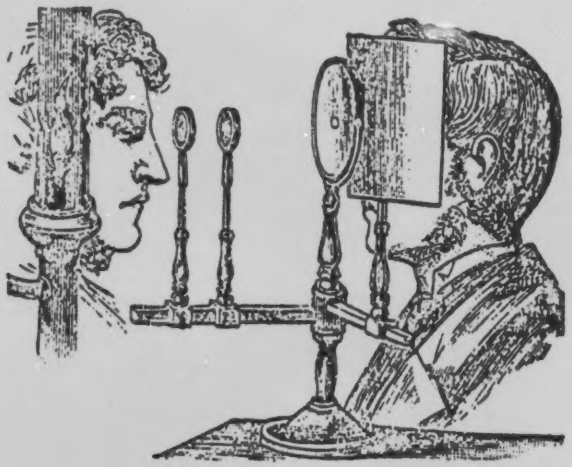
HOW ARE DECISIONS IN THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE MADE?

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

The formula the Financial Aid Office uses in determining a student's financial aid eligibility is: Cost of education minus resources equals financial eligibility. To ascertain the costs of an education at each year the Financial Aid Office develops a set of standard budgets. These budgets are based on average costs, and are intended to provide sufficient funds for the majority of students in most circumstances. An effort is made to consider the situation of the individual student. For example, certain majors may require more books and supplies than for other majors.

The basic assumption in formulating the budgets is that education is of primary importance to the student. The student is expected to contribute a minimum of $750 from either savings, a summer job, or employment. This amount is assumed to be a resource in calculating fiscal aid eligibility.

If a student is dependent as defined by federal or state regulations (see definition on page 3), it is expected that his/her parent(s) will contribute to the educational costs to the extent of their ability. The determined parents' contribution, taking into account the family's income, net worth, number of dependents, and number of family members attending college, is considered as an available resource whether or not the student receives this amount from his/her parent(s).



Our unique system of personal interviews

TABLE 1

Parents' contribution from total income before taxes and minimum standard allowance, for two-parent family by number of family members.*

TOTAL INCOME	NUMBER OF FAMILY MEMBERS 3	4	5	6	7
$ 9,000	$ 210	0	0	0	0
$12,000	$ 710	$ 430	$ 170	0	0
$15,000	$1,140	$ 870	$ 620	$ 430	$ 330
$20,000	$2,390	$1,880	$1,500	$1,250	$1,150
$25,000	$3,910	$3,330	$2,820	$2,420	$2,260

*These estimates do not take into consideration any unusual assets or expenses.

In the interview with a Financial Aid Advisor, an appropriate budget is determined for the student and available resources are calculated. The difference between the determined budget and available resources is the student's financial aid eligibility. A student is eligible for this amount in financial aid.

TABLE 2

Standard Budgets/Nine Months

	Single Commuter	Single On Campus	Single Off Campus	Married[1]	Single Parent[2]
Fees	$ 205	$ 205	$ 205	$ 205	$ 205
Books/Supplies	225	225	225	225	225
Food/Housing	900	2,210	2,210	3,950	3,950
Transportation	510	250	400	510	510
Personal/Misc.	510	510	510	910	910
Total	$2,350	$3,400	$3,550	$5,800	$5,800
Less Standard Employment Contribution	$ 750	$ 750	$ 750	$3,000	$ 750
Maximum Financial Aid Eligibility	$1,600	$2,650	$2,800	$2,800	$5,050

[1] Add $120 per month for first child and $100 per month for each additional child.

[2] One child is included. Add $100 per month per additional child.

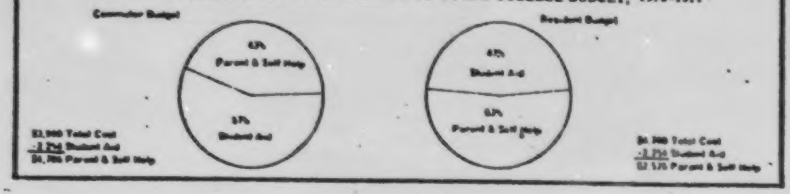
The average costs should be considered as a guide. Any additional expenses that are designated by regulations may be added to the typical budget in order to realistically reflect expenses for the school year.

Estimated Budget for a College Student for 1976-1977

	Commuter-Day	Resident Day	Commuter Evening Student
Tuition	$2,450*	$2,450	$1,464 (24 hrs.) *
Fees	125*	175	60*
Books & Supplies	185*	185	150*
Room	0	650	0
Board	500	650	500
Personal & Recreation	400	400	400
Transportation	300	270	300
Approx. Total Costs	$3,960	$4,780	$2,874

*Actual out-of-pocket expenses for commuting students.

ANALYSIS OF STUDENT AID IN COMPARISON TO TOTAL COLLEGE BUDGET, 1976-1977



Understanding Costs of Attendance

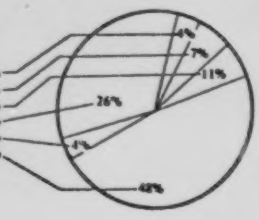
California State University,
Long Beach

The Financial Aid Center at CSULB establishes standard budgets which reflect *average* costs for students. Our budgets provide for a modest but adequate standard of living and are developed from surveys of what it costs students to live in California.

Will these costs be stable from year to year? Although we have not experienced dramatic increases, these costs go up each year to reflect increases in the cost of living. By comparing costs over the past 2 years, you can see where inflation impacts the most:

Apartment Budget
Single Student

1976/77 - 1978/79	
Fees	Up 9%
Transportation	Up 4%
Misc. Personal	Up 27%
Out-of-State Fees	Up 30%
Books/Supplies	Up 5%
Room & Board	Up 15%



Total Costs for In-State students increased about 14% in 2 years.

Total Costs for Out-of-State students increased about 15% in 2 years.

This example is reflective of cost trends whether you live on or off campus. (To project costs over a 4-5 year period, you must assume a 6-8% annual inflation rate.) When eligibility for aid is determined, expenses will be based upon most current costs that apply to students.

Planning begins with an estimate of expenses you will have. To help you, we have developed some typical budgets which show average expenses students have.

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Estimating Your Chances of Qualifying for Aid

If your college plans depend on whether or not you qualify for aid, it is important to be informed about the possibilities of someone like you qualifying.

Look at your resources. If you are dependent* upon parents, you and your parents are expected to contribute to the cost of your education. If you are independent*, you (and your spouse, if married) are expected to contribute to the cost of your education. These contributions are resources we expect you to use to meet basic budget expenses. If resources fall short of expenses, you will qualify for aid to make up the difference.

Student Contribution

This is the result of assessing the earning ability of students through summer and/or academic year employment and spouse's employment. The average earning power of students is expected as a minimum contribution from you. Additionally, if you are married and your spouse is not a student, the spouse's contributions will be expected to cover at least one-half of joint living costs. If you have children under 2 years of age, contributions are adjusted. If you have assets (savings, investments), these are partially considered in your contribution.

Student Earnings Contribution Table for 1979-80

minimum per academic year 9-months - 2 semesters	Full-Time Student	3/4-Time Student	1/2-Time Student
Freshman	$ 325	$1369	$2413
Sophomore	750	1794	2838
Junior	750	1794	2838
Senior	750	1794	2838
Spouse	2125	2142	3534
Dependent student living at home with zero parent contribution.	325	684	1206

Parent Contribution

Parental contributions are calculated from the financial data you furnish on the Student Aid Application for California and send to College Scholarship Service (CSS), our processor. CSS is an independent, not-for-profit agency that performs a standard analysis to determine how much parents can pay. This analysis is sent to CSULB where our financial aid counselors personally review each case to make any necessary adjustments in the analysis. CSS does not award or deny aid. Our counselors make the final decision using a uniform method and human judgment. The exact determination involves some complicated computations but the Parental Contribution chart can give you an estimate of the amount expected from your parents.

Parents Contribution Chart

Three factors income, net assets, and size of family are significant in determining the parents' contribution. The following tables show expected parents' contribution at various levels of income and net assets and with different family sizes.

Estimated Contributions

(Minimal Contribution Per Academic Year)

If net assets are $10,000, the following incomes will produce Parent Contributions based on size of family:

		Size of Family			
		3	4	5	6
Parents' 1978 Income Before Taxes *not take-home pay*	$ 8,000	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0
	12,000	580	270	0	0
	16,000	1,180	860	570	250
	20,000	1,950	1,510	1,170	840
	24,000	3,030	2,420	1,940	1,500
	28,000	4,190	3,560	2,980	2,370

The figures in these tables are parental contribution figures which assume:

- Two parents, with one working parent age 45-49
- Only one dependent in post-secondary education
- No business and/or farm assets
- U.S. income tax return information: 1978 schedule, joint return, standard deduction
- No social security benefits for education
- No unusual medical, dental, casualty or theft expenses
- No other unusual circumstances

If net assets are $20,000, the following incomes will produce Parent Contributions based on size of family:

		Size of Family			
		3	4	5	6
Parents' 1978 Income Before Taxes *not take-home pay*	$ 8,000	$ 80	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0
	12,000	700	380	90	0
	16,000	1,300	960	670	350
	20,000	2,130	1,660	1,290	950
	24,000	3,260	2,620	2,110	1,640
	28,000	4,400	3,770	3,190	2,550

If net assets are $30,000, the following incomes will produce Parent Contributions based on size of family:

		Size of Family			
		3	4	5	6
Parents' 1978 Income Before taxes *not take-home pay*	$ 8,000	$ 220	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0
	12,000	850	530	240	0
	16,000	1,480	1,110	810	490
	20,000	2,390	1,880	1,480	1,100
	24,000	3,550	2,920	2,360	1,840
	28,000	4,680	4,060	3,470	2,830

If net assets are $40,000, the following incomes will produce Parent Contributions based on size of family:

		Size of Family			
		3	4	5	6
Parents' 1978 Income Before Taxes *not take-home pay*	$ 8,000	$ 430	$ 120	$ 0	$ 0
	12,000	1,030	720	430	100
	16,000	1,720	1,320	1,010	690
	20,000	2,730	2,170	1,720	1,310
	24,000	3,910	3,280	2,700	2,120
	28,000	5,000	4,390	3,830	3,180

Your chances of receiving aid are good if anticipated educational expenses are more than resources. Here is the formula for calculating this, using the basic budget that applies to your situation and the contribution charts:

CALCULATION

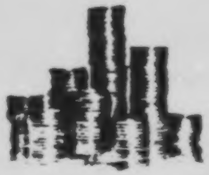
	Dependent Students		Independent Students
Step 1	$ ________	My cost of education *(basic budget)*	$ ________
Step 2	________	My parents' contribution	________
Step 3	________	My contribution *(summer savings/academic year earnings)*	________
Step 4	________	My estimated financial need	________

The Net Cost Formula

NET COST to you your Basic Budget minus Financial Aid

If need in Step 4 is $100 or more, apply for aid from CSULB. Undergraduates apply for BEOG. Use the Student Aid Application for California (SAAC) to apply for all programs.

If need in Step 4 is $100 or less, your chances of qualifying are slim unless unusual circumstances exist. Ask the Financial Aid Center about guaranteed loans and part time work opportunities on campus.



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*See discussion of dependent/independent, page 6

Mountain Empire Community College
Financial Aid Profile

What is likely to happen to me if I apply for assistance at MECC?

The following information describes the way financial aid was awarded to undergraduate students last year. It is provided as an indication of institutional practices with the understanding that changes in funding levels may influence awards in subsequent years.

	DEPENDENT STUDENTS From Families With Incomes		INDEPENDENT STUDENTS	
	Under $9,000	$9,000 to $18,000	Single	Married
Percent of all applicants for aid	68.57%	8.57%	9.52%	13.33%
Percent of all aid recipients	68.57%	8.57%	9.52%	13.33%
Average contribution expected from family (student and parent)	$ 407.11	$ 512.91	$1,208.00	$1,346.57
Average grant (including B.E.O.G.)	$ 728.95	$ 523.25	$ 748.67	$ 679.75
Average loan	$ N/A	$ N/A	$ N/A	$ N/A
Average term-time job income	$ 667.99	$ 489.78	$ 613.00	$ 857.14
Average hourly wage for term-time job	$ 2.15	$ 2.15	$ 2.15	$ 2.15
Average number of hours per week worked	$ 10.36	$ 7.59	$ 9.50	$ 13.29
Average total aid from all sources	$1,396.94	$1,013.03	$1,361.00	$1,536.89

*Dependent Students from Families with Incomes $18,000 to $27,000 and over Non-applicable at MECC.

ISSC

WHAT ARE YOUR CHANCES OF RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID?

Percent of 1976-77 Public College Applicants Receiving ISSC Awards

Family Income Range	Receiving Awards	Family Income Range	Receiving Awards
$0 - 13,999	more than 90%	$22,000 - 22,999	46%
$14,000 - 14,999	87%	$23,000 - 23,999	41%
$15,000 - 15,999	81%	$24,000 - 24,999	40%
$16,000 - 16,999	77%	$25,000 - 25,999	36%
$17,000 - 17,999	72%	$26,000 - 26,999	35%
$18,000 - 18,999	66%	$27,000 - 27,999	31%
$19,000 - 19,999	63%	$28,000 - 28,999	27%
$20,000 - 20,999	58%	$29,000 - 29,999	33%
$21,000 - 21,999	50%	$30,000 and up	27%

Note: Approximately 90% of these awards fully cover tuition and fees.

BEOG

Percent of 1975-76 Illinois Applicants Receiving BEOG Awards

Family Income Range	Receiving Awards	Family Income Range	Receiving Awards
$0 - 8,999	more than 90%	$13,500 - 14,999	38%
$ 9,000 - 10,499	83%	$15,000 - 16,499	20% (est.)
$10,500 - 11,999	71%	$16,500 and up	less than 10%
$12,000 - 13,499	55%		

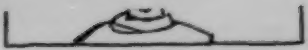
Note: Average BEOG award to students was greater than $850.

Aid Programs

Information on available aid programs often gives little specific detail about the nature of the program or how a student qualifies for aid under it. The following example typifies what the student often sees in a financial aid brochure; it is quite inadequate in providing a person with information about the program.

> **NATIONAL DIRECT STUDENT LOAN (NDSL)**—This is a federally funded program providing long-term, low-interest loans in amounts governed by established need and availability of funds. Three percent simple interest and repayment of the principle begins nine months from the date the borrower ceases to be a full-time or half-time student.
>
> **FEDERALLY INSURED STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM (FISL)**—Loans are made to full-time students through private lending institutions such as banks, savings and loans, and credit unions. Applications and related forms are available at the Financial Aid Office.
>
> **BASIC EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY GRANT (BEOG)**—These federally funded grants are designed to provide up to $1,600 in assistance for eligible undergraduates.
>
> **SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY GRANT (SEOG)**—These are granted to undergraduates who have exceptional financial need. Preference is given to those students from low income backgrounds.
>
> ### COLLEGE WORK-STUDY PROGRAM
>
> The College Work-Study Program provides employment opportunities for qualified students to meet part of their educational expenses. The majority of positions available are located on-campus while off-campus positions are limited to public service agencies and other non-profit agencies.

$200. session and a cumulative maximum



eligibility as a half-time student).

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25 NATIONAL DIRECT STUDENT LOAN ?

QUESTION 25. WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING THE NATIONAL DIRECT STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM?

Rights

1. A student may borrow up to $2,500 through his/her sophomore year, up to $5,000 through the senior year and up to $10,000 graduate work, provided there is demonstrated need.

2. The student is not charged with the 3% interest rate until 9 months after s-he has ceased to be at least a half-time student (6 hours undergraduate, 5 hours graduate).

3. The student does not have to start repayment of the loan 9 months after s-he has ceased to be at least a half-time student.

4. The student has a maximum of 10 years to repay the loan except there is a minimum repayment of $30 per month.

5. The student has the option of selecting one of several repayment schedules: monthly, quarterly—see table on right—(and annually for those qualifying for cancellation features). See following Items 6, 7 and 8.

6. A portion of the student's loan, both principal and interest, may be cancelled for each year the student teaches full time in a school:

(a) designated by the Commissioner of Education as having a high enrollment of students from low income families,

(b) for the physically or mentally or emotionally handicapped children, according to the following schedule:

(i) 15 percent for the first and second year;

(ii) 20 percent for the third and fourth year;

(iii) 30 percent for the fifth year.

7. Fifteen percent of the loan (principal and interest) may be cancelled for each year that the student teaches school full time in the Headstart Program up to the whole loan amount—principal and interest.

8. The student's loan can be cancelled at the rate of 12½% for each complete year of service in the armed forces of the United States (in an area of hostilities that qualifies for special pay) up to 50% of the loan.

9. The student's total disability or death cancels the loan.

10. The student may defer payments up to three years when serving in the Armed Forces, Peace Corps or VISTA.

11. The student at his/her option may without penalty prepay all or any part of the loan amount and interest at any time.

The student has the option of selecting several repayment schedules: monthly, quarterly, or annually. A sample of a quarterly schedule involving a $1,000 loan is as follows:

$1,000 Quarterly 3% Interest $90 Per Quarter

No. of Payments	Payment	Interest	Principal	Unpaid Balance
				$1,000.00
1	$ 90.00	$ 7.50	$ 82.50	917.00
2	90.00	6.88	83.12	834.38
3	90.00	6.26	83.74	750.64
4	90.00	5.63	84.37	666.27
5	90.00	5.00	85.00	581.27
6	90.00	4.36	85.64	495.63
7	90.00	3.72	86.28	409.35
8	90.00	3.07	86.93	332.42
9	90.00	2.49	87.51	234.91
10	90.00	1.76	88.24	146.67
11	90.00	1.10	88.90	57.77
12	58.20	.43	57.77	.00
	$1,048.20	$48.20	$1,000.00	$ .00

12. The student may apply for a deferment or reduction of scheduled repayments. Western Michigan University will determine whether there are extraordinary circumstances which warrant honoring the student's request.

Responsibilities

1. The student must keep the Business Office informed of any change in permanent address.

2. The student must inform the Business Office when s-he is no longer attending at least half time or is transferring to another post-secondary institution.

3. The student must attend any exit interview arranged by the Business Office.

4. The student must repay the loan in accordance with the schedule of repayment agreed upon whether or not billings have been received by the student.

5. The student must inform the Business Office of any deferment or cancellation status and file with that office the appropriate forms.

6. A student failing to make scheduled payments or failing to submit timely and satisfactory evidence of qualifying for a deferment or cancellation must pay any charge assessed by the Business Office.

7. A student must read carefully and make certain s-he understands all the conditions of the loan as specified on the Promissory Note.

Better information on the aid programs available tells clearly the purpose of the program, target group for the aid, advantages and limitations of the programs, typical award practices, and necessary decision points in the application process.

What Are My Responsibilities As a Financial Aid Recipient?

The offer and acceptance of financial aid is a contract between you and the University. It is based on certain conditions that you should understand before you accept financial assistance.

You must:

Understand your loan obligation
If you accept a loan as part of your financial aid package, you are accepting the responsibility of repaying the loan with your future earnings. This is both a legal and a moral obligation, so be sure to read all the conditions of the loan very carefully. Failure to repay will not only damage your credit rating but will prevent future generations of students from attending the University with help from the loan program. Related to this is your obligation to have an exit interview with the Office of Student Loan Collections before you withdraw or graduate. At this interview you receive your repayment schedule which will indicate when payment will begin.

Report changes in your financial situation
If you or your family obtain additional resources (a job, an outside scholarship, a change in your parents' income), you must inform the Office of Financial Aid so that your award can be adjusted. If your need is reduced, you may have to repay funds that were previously received in excess of your need.

Enroll in at least fifteen units (three courses)* as an undergraduate or ten units (two courses) as a graduate
In order to continue to receive funds as a full-time aid recipient, you must *enroll in* fifteen units as an undergraduate or ten units as a graduate student each quarter. If you enroll in only ten units as an undergraduate or five units as a graduate, your aid will be reduced accordingly, and you may be forced to repay a portion of the funds already received. If you register for five units as an undergraduate, you are not eligible to receive any financial aid because federal regulations require that you be enrolled in at least six units to maintain your eligibility.

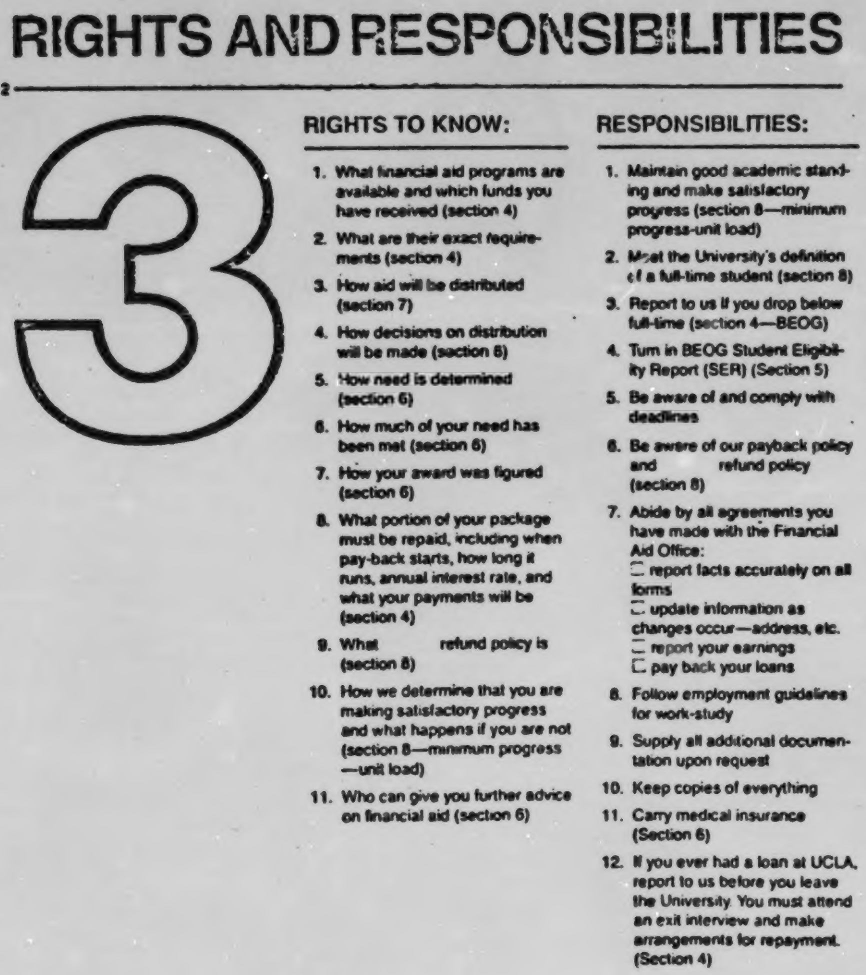
Use financial aid funds only for educationally related expenses
When you accept your Offer of Financial Aid, you sign a notarized Affidavit of Educational Purpose which states that you will use the funds you receive only for educationally related expenses. Failure to comply with this regulation may result in cancellation or repayment of your award.

File your study list packet by the deadline each quarter
If you do not file your study list packet by the deadline, you will not appear to be registered on our financial aid computer reports, and your financial aid will be cancelled for the remainder of the quarter.

Maintain satisfactory academic progress
According to University guidelines, you must *complete* at least seven courses during your first academic year and at least eight courses during each subsequent year to make satisfactory academic progress. If you do not make satisfactory progress, you are subject to "disqualification" and lose your eligibility to receive financial aid.

Pick up your financial aid checks in the Student Loan Office within ten days of the scheduled disbursement date
If you do not pick up your checks within ten days of the scheduled disbursement date, your checks will be redrawn and only reissued subject to availability of funds. If you have a problem (illness, emergency, etc.) and cannot pick up your checks within ten days, call your financial aid adviser to make other arrangements.

*At each course receives five units of credit.



RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2

3

RIGHTS TO KNOW:

1. What financial aid programs are available and which funds you have received (section 4)
2. What are their exact requirements (section 4)
3. How aid will be distributed (section 7)
4. How decisions on distribution will be made (section 8)
5. How need is determined (section 6)
6. How much of your need has been met (section 6)
7. How your award was figured (section 6)
8. What portion of your package must be repaid, including when pay-back starts, how long it runs, annual interest rate, and what your payments will be (section 4)
9. What refund policy is (section 8)
10. How we determine that you are making satisfactory progress and what happens if you are not (section 8—minimum progress —unit load)
11. Who can give you further advice on financial aid (section 6)

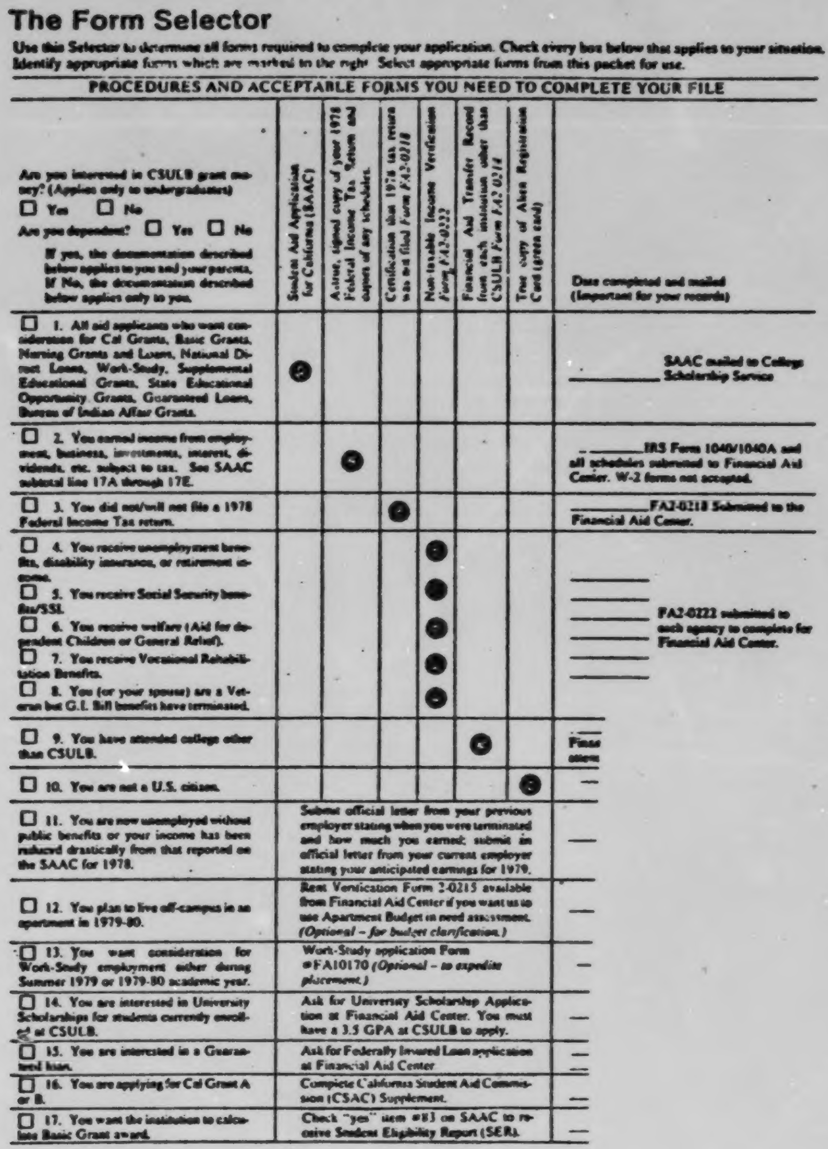
RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Maintain good academic standing and make satisfactory progress (section 8—minimum progress-unit load)
2. Meet the University's definition of a full-time student (section 8)
3. Report to us if you drop below full-time (section 4—BEOG)
4. Turn in BEOG Student Eligibility Report (SER) (Section 5)
5. Be aware of and comply with deadlines
6. Be aware of our payback policy and refund policy (section 8)
7. Abide by all agreements you have made with the Financial Aid Office:
   - ☐ report facts accurately on all forms
   - ☐ update information as changes occur—address, etc.
   - ☐ report your earnings
   - ☐ pay back your loans
8. Follow employment guidelines for work-study
9. Supply all additional documentation upon request
10. Keep copies of everything
11. Carry medical insurance (Section 6)
12. If you ever had a loan at UCLA, report to us before you leave the University. You must attend an exit interview and make arrangements for repayment. (Section 4)

Aid Application Deadlines

Knowing and meeting deadlines is an essential part of being a successful aid applicant. Yet all too often application schedules and deadlines are not clearly identified for the student. Many colleges are now providing a "flow chart" of events covering the application, award, and disbursement cycles so that the student knows each incremental step to complete the process successfully. The following calendar and checklist are popular devices for improving the flow of financial aid information:

California State
University at Long Beach



The Form Selector

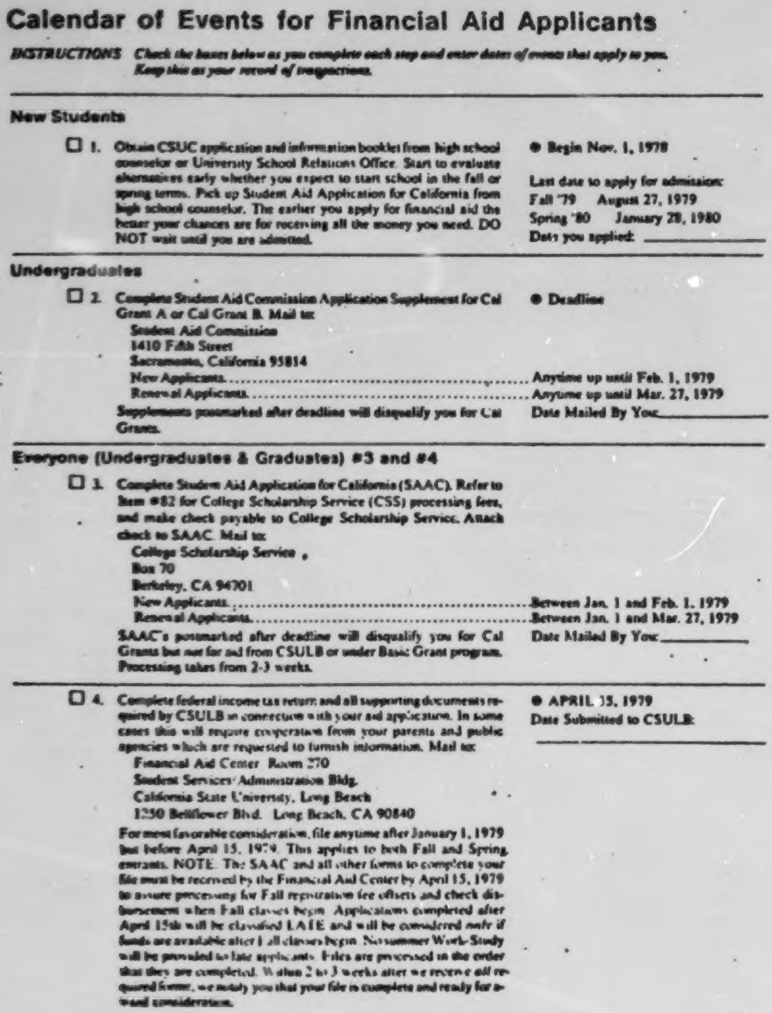
Use this Selector to determine all forms required to complete your application. Check every box below that applies to your situation. Identify appropriate forms which are marked to the right. Select appropriate forms from this packet for use.

PROCEDURES AND ACCEPTABLE FORMS YOU NEED TO COMPLETE YOUR FILE

Are you interested in CSULB grant money? (Applies only to undergraduates)
☐ Yes ☐ No
Are you dependent? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, the documentation described below applies to you and your parents. If No, the documentation described below applies only to you.

	Student Aid Application for California (SAAC)	Actual, signed copy of your 1978 Federal Income Tax Return and copies of any schedules.	Certification that 1978 tax return was not filed *Form FA2-0218*	Non-taxable Income Verification *Form FA2-0222*	Financial Aid Transfer Record from each institution other than CSULB *Form FA2-0214*	True copy of Alien Registration Card (green card)	Date completed and mailed (Important for your records)
☐ 1. All aid applicants who want consideration for Cal Grants, Basic Grants, Nursing Grants and Loans, National Direct Loans, Work-Study, Supplemental Educational Grants, State Educational Opportunity Grants, Guaranteed Loans, Bureau of Indian Affair Grants.	●						______ SAAC mailed to College Scholarship Service
☐ 2. You earned income from employment, business, investments, interest, dividends, etc. subject to tax. See SAAC subtotal line 17A through 17E.		●					______ IRS Form 1040/1040A and all schedules submitted to Financial Aid Center. W-2 forms not accepted.
☐ 3. You did not/will not file a 1978 Federal Income Tax return.			●				______ FA2-0218 Submitted to the Financial Aid Center.
☐ 4. You receive unemployment benefits, disability insurance, or retirement income.				●			______
☐ 5. You receive Social Security benefits/SSI.				●			______
☐ 6. You receive welfare (Aid for dependent Children or General Relief).				●			______ FA2-0222 submitted to each agency to complete for Financial Aid Center.
☐ 7. You receive Vocational Rehabilitation Benefits.				●			______
☐ 8. You (or your spouse) are a Veteran but G.I. Bill benefits have terminated.				●			______
☐ 9. You have attended college other than CSULB.					●		______ Finan atten
☐ 10. You are not a U.S. citizen.						●	______
☐ 11. You are now unemployed without public benefits or your income has been reduced drastically from that reported on the SAAC for 1978.	Submit official letter from your previous employer stating when you were terminated and how much you earned; submit an official letter from your current employer stating your anticipated earnings for 1979.						______
☐ 12. You plan to live off-campus in an apartment in 1979-80.	Rent Verification Form 2-0215 available from Financial Aid Center if you want us to use Apartment Budget in need assessment. *(Optional – for budget clarification.)*						______
☐ 13. You want consideration for Work-Study employment either during Summer 1979 or 1979-80 academic year.	Work-Study application Form #FA10170 *(Optional – to expedite placement.)*						______
☐ 14. You are interested in University Scholarships for students currently enrolled at CSULB.	Ask for University Scholarship Application at Financial Aid Center. You must have a 3.5 GPA at CSULB to apply.						______
☐ 15. You are interested in a Guaranteed loan.	Ask for Federally Insured Loan application at Financial Aid Center						______
☐ 16. You are applying for Cal Grant A or B.	Complete California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) Supplement.						______
☐ 17. You want the institution to calculate Basic Grant award.	Check "yes" item #83 on SAAC to receive Student Eligibility Report (SER).						______



Calendar of Events for Financial Aid Applicants

INSTRUCTIONS Check the boxes below as you complete each step and enter dates of events that apply to you. Keep this as your record of transactions.

New Students

☐ 1. Obtain CSUC application and information booklet from high school counselor or University School Relations Office. Start to evaluate alternatives early whether you expect to start school in the fall or spring terms. Pick up Student Aid Application for California from high school counselor. The earlier you apply for financial aid the better your chances are for receiving all the money you need. DO NOT wait until you are admitted.

● Begin Nov. 1, 1978

Last date to apply for admission:
Fall '79 August 27, 1979
Spring '80 January 28, 1980
Date you applied: ____________

Undergraduates

☐ 2. Complete Student Aid Commission Application Supplement for Cal Grant A or Cal Grant B. Mail to:

Student Aid Commission
1410 Fifth Street
Sacramento, California 95814

● Deadline

New Applicants...Anytime up until Feb. 1, 1979
Renewal Applicants...Anytime up until Mar. 27, 1979

Supplements postmarked after deadline will disqualify you for Cal Grants.

Date Mailed By You: ____________

Everyone (Undergraduates & Graduates) #3 and #4

☐ 3. Complete Student Aid Application for California (SAAC). Refer to Item #82 for College Scholarship Service (CSS) processing fees, and make check payable to College Scholarship Service. Attach check to SAAC. Mail to:

College Scholarship Service ,
Box 70
Berkeley, CA 94701

New Applicants...Between Jan. 1 and Feb. 1, 1979
Renewal Applicants...Between Jan. 1 and Mar. 27, 1979

SAAC's postmarked after deadline will disqualify you for Cal Grants but *not* for aid from CSULB or under Basic Grant program. Processing takes from 2-3 weeks.

Date Mailed By You: ____________

☐ 4. Complete federal income tax return and all supporting documents required by CSULB in connection with your aid application. In some cases this will require cooperation from your parents and public agencies which are requested to furnish information. Mail to:

Financial Aid Center Room 270
Student Services/Administration Bldg.
California State University, Long Beach
1250 Bellflower Blvd. Long Beach, CA 90840

● APRIL 15, 1979
Date Submitted to CSULB: ____________

For most favorable consideration, file anytime after January 1, 1979 but before April 15, 1979. This applies to both Fall and Spring entrants. NOTE: The SAAC and all other forms to complete your file must be received by the Financial Aid Center by April 15, 1979 to assure processing for Fall registration fee offsets and check disbursement when Fall classes begin. Applications completed after April 15th will be classified LATE and will be considered *only* if funds are available after Fall classes begin. No summer Work-Study will be provided to late applicants. Files are processed in the order that they are completed. Within 2 to 3 weeks after we receive *all* required forms, we notify you that your file is complete and ready for award consideration.

New Areas of Concern

In addition to revising and expanding information previously provided, several new areas of information offer important help to the aid applicant. One example of this is in the area of financial planning. For many students, a college education is the largest financial commitment they have ever made. Some have little experience managing money, budgeting, and, for some, setting up and running their own living situation. Assistance with budgeting and money management are services now offered by financial aid offices at California State University at Long Beach, California Polytechnic State University, The University of California at Davis and at Santa Cruz. The following budget worksheet from California State University

Use the completed Budget Worksheet to help you see how to put your own together. The period of time for which you make a budget is arbitrary—it may be weekly, monthly, for a semester, or 12 months. We have selected a semester budget plan which is convenient for most students at CSULB. Using this budget, you record income and expenses for each semester. When listing expenses, plan on higher expenses at the beginning of the fall term for tuition/fees, books and advance deposits for rent and utilities. Keep in mind your income may be irregular and you will need to reserve income so that it is available when you need it. Refer to our publication called "Learning Money" which explains how and when we disburse financial aid and student payroll checks.

In evaluating your expenditures, remember to give your highest priority to the essentials relevant to education and basic living. All other expenses are *discretionary* (a matter of choice) and must come *after* the essentials of life are met. You will find that some expenses are *fixed* in that they are set and do not usually fluctuate, at least for your budget period. Other expenses are *flexible* in that they may be reduced if necessary, depending upon your preference, choices, and variable circumstances over time. It is in the area of discretionary and flexible expenses that you can exercise discipline and foresight resulting in controlled buying and effective budgeting.

At the end of each month, you will want to carry your total income and total expenses for the month to a balance sheet. It is here you reconcile your rough figures to determine how next month looks to you financially. Subtract expenses from income. If the figure is a minus figure, you have got some catching up to do. You have overspent your income. Take that minus figure and give it a place on the next month's leftover expenses. If your balance figure was a plus, you have a sound plan to follow. Enter the plus figure in next month's balance brought forward as savings.

The Budget Worksheets on the following pages are for you to use in figuring out your own budget. If you find that your expenses exceed your resources for the budget period, take another look at your figures. Examine your expense list critically. Can any of these areas be met with less money? Have a frank discussion with your parents or spouse. Can they help you out with increased support? Perhaps changing your summer plans to get a better paying job would help your financial balance by allowing you more cash on hand at the beginning of the academic year.

Read the section on stretching your budget in this booklet and try to make adjustments to reduce your expenses. If you still need help making ends meet, talk with a financial aid counselor to explore alternatives and possible justification for additional aid.

SAMPLE BUDGET

Income For: Fall Semester	Fixed	Flexible	Essential	Discretionary	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Term Total
Money from parents					46	76	61	61	244
Money from savings					208		142		350
Grant					396	287			683
Scholarship					104				104
Loan									
Work-Study earnings						175	175	150	500
Other Wages									
Public Benefits *VA, Soc. Sec., etc.*									
Spouse's Wages									
Other GIFT					40				40
Line 1 TOTAL INCOME					794	538	378	211	1921
Expenses For: Fall Semester									
Direct Educational Expenses:									
Fees	✓		✓		104				104
Tuition	✓		✓						-0-
Books & Supplies		✓	✓		105				105
Transportation *gas, parking, insurance, routine service*		✓	✓		70	40	40	20	170
Indirect Educational Expenses:									
Rent/Housing	✓		✓		300	150	150	150	750
Food		✓	✓		70	70	70	70	280
Utilities/Phone		✓	✓		60	40	40	40	180
Clothing/Laundry		✓	✓		10	10	10	10	40
Medical/Dental		✓	✓		45		30		75
Recreation/Personal		✓		✓	20	20	20	20	80
Savings		✓		✓		10	10		20
Miscellaneous *child care, child support, gifts*		✓		✓	10	10	10	10	40
Installment Debts *charge accounts, emergency loans currently due*		✓		✓	15	15	15	28	73
Line 2 TOTAL EXPENSES					809	365	395	348	1917

Balance Sheet—Fall Semester	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Semester Total
Line 1 Total Income	$794	$538	$378	$211	$1921
Less Leftover Expenses Not Paid During Previous Month	0	15	158	141	
Plus Income Unspent From Previous Month	0	0	0	0	
Line 2 Less Total Expenses This Month	809	365	395	348	1917
Carryover To Next Month	<$15>	$158	$141	$4	$4.

at Long Beach illustrates the kind of printed materials being developed to assist students with money management. It is regularly used in Entry Seminars for new aid recipients on campus. Money Management, the workbook from which the budget sheet came, is also used with students who request increases in their awards or who apply for emergency loans while receiving full financial aid packages to meet their need.

The first part of this chapter identified information about financial aid that is important for colleges to provide to students--information students say they need to make good college choices. The second part gave examples of how some colleges have actually presented this information. The examples given are not an exhaustive set. Rather, they are a sampling of possibilities intended to convey a spirit and sense of what colleges could and should be doing to improve the information they provide prospective students. The materials provided must be accurate, comprehensive, usable, and written in a vocabulary the student will understand. In undertaking a campus information improvement project, there will certainly be additional topics and areas you will want to cover, for example: a listing of financial aid office personnel and sources of help on campus, outside sources of aid, disbursement practices, the definition of satisfactory progress, the process for appealing a financial aid decision, and the institution's policy regarding confidentiality and conditions of access and disclosure. A later chapter will identify additional resources available to you as you examine these areas.

C. THE PROCESS OF IMPROVING CAMPUS INFORMATION

Hearing about the need for better information and seeing examples of how it might look are a long way from actually doing it yourself. The process you choose to improve the cost and financial aid information on your campus may be as important as the information itself. Without a good process the information may never get revised, or if it does, it may never get used. Few people have trouble with the idea that colleges should provide students with better information. Rather, disagreements surround the issues of who should do it, whose budget should pay for it, and exactly what information will get shared with whom. An earlier chapter has already suggested a process of undertaking campus information improvement projects. Dr. Angelo, in an earlier chapter, pointed out that the process most effective for improving campus information will vary considerably across colleges. It will depend both on the nature of the material to be produced and the political climate on campus. However, a description of how one institution, California State University at

Long Beach, undertook a campus project to improve its financial aid material illustrates one approach that was effective.

A Case Study

California State University at Long Beach (CSULB) is a large, low-cost, public institution with no endowment or institutional aid programs beyond the federal and state funded programs. Historically, Cal. State-Long Beach has had no special printed material specifically describing costs and aid for distribution to prospective students. The primary vehicles of this information were the admission application and an information booklet published by the Office of the Chancellor for the 19 campuses within the California State University and College system. This system-wide booklet was distributed to prospective students by each college's School Relations staff. It contained a preliminary financial aid application that the student could use to start a file in the Financial Aid Center. The Financial Aid Center also used the College Scholarship publication, Meeting College Costs, to respond to student inquiries about financing higher education.

Awards were typically determined in mid to late summer. Consequently, once students applied for aid, they often did not hear about their award until just before the start of school in the fall. As a result, students at CSULB did not have sufficient information on applying for aid. They also did not have sufficient time between hearing about their award and starting class to make alternative plans if they felt their award did not adequately cover their need. As one might expect, students were often confused about the process of applying for aid and complained about the treatment they received.

In response to these problems, the Financial Aid Center at CSULB initiated an information improvement effort in 1976 that resulted in production of The Student Aid Guide. This lengthy handout provided comprehensive information about application, awarding, and disbursement policies, and standards for students to maintain eligibility. This Guide was aimed, however, only at enrolled students and was used in conjunction with application workshops conducted for renewal aid applicants. These information activities were successful in improving the quality of the contact between enrolled students and the Financial Aid Center and the students' understanding of the financial aid process and services. Funds were not available to design and produce financial aid publications for prospective students, and the university continued to give inadequate responses to the many requests for information from these students.

As a response to passage of the Higher Education Amendments of 1976 and also as a means of enhancing enrollments, the university redirected its priorities. Following the success of The Student Aid Guide for enrolled students, the Financial Aid Center was prepared to develop new material to reach prospective students. Project CHOICE provided a vehicle to expedite this move. Working with CHOICE, the university decided to produce new financial aid publications and a comprehensive institutional prospectus to help in student recruitment.

The first objective, then, was to assure high-level support for the project within the campus. The project was presented to the senior management group and approval for participation in CHOICE was obtained from the president of the university and all senior executives. This process of gaining top administration approval gave the project campus-wide visibility. The president named the vice president for administrative affairs as project director. He knew the institution well; he had the respect of the academic community; and he served as an important link between the Financial Aid Center and other divisions within the university. The vice president had the responsibility for charting the course of the project and for obtaining the resources to support it. He also had the authority for final decisions in all matters concerning the materials to be produced.

Under the supervision of the vice president, the director of financial aid was given 50 percent release time to become project coordinator. She was assigned responsibility for researching and writing the financial aid materials so they could be used with the institution's prospectus or could be used alone. To assist her, a Project CHOICE campus team was also appointed with representatives from other administrative offices (Student Activities, School Relations, Academic Affairs). Because of the technical and complex nature of financial aid, the Project CHOICE campus team's contribution was primarily in reviewing and approving the final materials rather than in writing them. Other resource people were involved in developing the financial aid information materials on an "as needed" basis for input and feedback. This interaction contributed to the final product's acceptance and use by those involved in financial aid on campus.

The process of developing the new materials can be described in several stages:

Stages

Education Stage. This involved informing the financial aid staff of the purpose, scope, and intended outcomes of the project. It involved helping each staff member see the benefits each might gain from a successful project.

Research Stage. What information do prospective students and parents need in order for students to be successful aid applicants and recipients? This was accomplished by interviewing students and staff at the institution and asking them what they felt should be included. The second aspect of the research was to identify what necessary information was already available and what had yet to be developed. In some cases information could be revised or extracted from existing reports. In other cases, new data had to be compiled and/or analyzed to provide necessary answers.

One of the important findings at this stage was that the necessary information fell in several different categories. Some students needed basic information on how to finance continued education after high school. Others needed information only on how to apply for financial assistance. Still others were concerned with managing their financial resources once the aid was received. This suggested the need for a series of short topical publications rather than one long one.

Another finding was that there were really two audiences for the new financial aid materials. Prospective students and their parents were one audience. Guidance counselors and others in an intermediate position between the college and the student represented a second important audience.

Writing Stage. Once the important information needs had been identified and the data responding to those needs had been assembled, the director of financial aid developed a working draft of the new financial aid booklets.

Pilot Test Stage. The working drafts of the documents were then circulated among students, staff, and several area guidance counselors. Each group was asked to critique the documents. The drafts were revised, based on these critiques, and final manuscripts were developed.

Production and Distribution Stage. This involved design, illustration, distribution, and publicity of the publications for both internal and external publics. An outside consultant was used to publish the booklets.

Three booklets were eventually developed:

1. Financial Aid Prospectus--an application packet with information instructions and forms for all new and renewal aid applicants;

2. Learning Money--in-depth information regarding the aid offer and a guide to financing the student's educational career. This booklet accompanied all awards;

3. Money Management--budgeting strategies used for individual and group counseling sessions for first-time aid recipients and anyone requesting increases in their aid package or emergency loans.

The publications were targeted to two primary audiences: students seeking information and intermediaries (counselors) providing information to students about financial aid. Since most of the CSULB students eligible for financial aid come from California high schools and community colleges, the publications were designed for traditional students (aged 18-24) and intended to communicate with the top one third of the high school graduates in California.

Costs

The exact costs of a project of this type are difficult to compute. It is particularly true of this project, since it was incorporated into the regular operating budget of the financial aid office. Staff hours were not strictly accounted for, but represented about nine months of the director's time. Production costs were about $1,500 for photography and illustrations, $1,000 for design and production, and about $12,000 for printing.

The project was more costly and required more time than anticipated. The initial response suggests that the effort was worthwhile and the payoffs may be considerable in both qualitative and quantitative terms. However, after only one year of experience using the new publications, their full impact has yet to be evaluated.

Developing the new financial aid materials seems to have had several outcomes. Most were positive; some were negative.

Positive Results

1. It increased the number of aid applications received on time (CSULB experienced a 195 percent improvement within one year).

2. It increased the accuracy of document completion (CSULB experienced a 5 percent decrease in supplementary requests for clarifying information within one year).

3. It reduced the number of aid applicants who failed to show up.

4. It reduced the counseling workload.

5. Complaints diminished--the materials seemed to produce a better match of student expectations with what programs can deliver.

6. It improved advising effectiveness, since the advisors, themselves, have better information.

7. It helped students take responsibility for themselves in planning their finances.

8. It enhanced public image of the program and office. The public relations value supports enrollment. Visibility is high and positive for the financial aid office.

9. It boosted staff morale and increased pride in the organization.

10. It increased the demand for the publications--everyone wants one.

11. The contribution to enrollment is unclear, but clearly not detrimental.

Negative Results

1. It may strain relationships.

2. The new publications have the potential of becoming dated within a short period of time; updating data for necessary revisions is time-consuming work.

3. Informed students may demand more of the institution; this puts additional pressure on staff.

4. More applications may mean saying "no" to more students.

5. Costs, time, and the number of revisions tend to exceed initial estimates.

6. The politics involved in implementing this project consumed staff time that could have been spent on other activities.

Within this case study several elements stand out as particularly important in understanding the success of the information improvement project at California State University at Long Beach:

1. The project had top-level administrative support.

2. The project had wide visibility among other administrative offices.

3. There was a specific person with direct responsibility for the project.

4. The project had adequate financial and staff resources. Indeed, it involved a half-time commitment of the director of financial aid.

5. The project provided multiple payoffs. That is, it contributed to the campus enrollment enhancement program, which helped the college respond to new federal regulations; and it helped the Financial Aid Center respond to students' need for better information.

6. Project staff members were sensitive to the new data collected. For example, they realized that the student needs they identified were better handled with three shorter documents than one long one.

CONCLUSION: AN INVITATION TO GET STARTED

Most financial aid officers know that financial aid has profound effects on the institution. Still, the gap between the financial aid information students receive and what they need remains large at many institutions. Getting started on a better information project is a matter of priorities and personal will. The models, the experience, and the resources from Project CHOICE and the institutions across the country already improving their information are available and can help reduce developmental costs and time requirements.* The time to start is now.

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*For information on the availability of these resources, write to Project CHOICE, 2001 School of Education, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109.

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IV. IMPROVING INFORMATION ON COLLEGE SERVICES AND ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

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Can I get the courses I want? Which courses are required and which are optional? Will the courses I take be taught by a professor or a teaching assistant? Will the courses be interesting?

The academic program of a college or university is the heart of the institution. It is the primary purpose for the college to exist. It is no surprise, then, that the availability of a desired program of study is also one of the most important factors in a student's choice of a college (Chapman and Johnson, 1979; Stark, 1978). Consequently, how a college describes its program is an important factor in good college decisions.

For many colleges and universities, however, this area of information needs a great deal of improvement. Colleges seldom describe their academic program with the overt intent to deceive or mislead students. More often, no one on the faculty or staff has given careful attention to how accurate or current the information provided really is. Statements that were once true are repeated without attention to changing times and circumstances. As a result, courses that have not been taught in five years continue to be listed as available. Faculty who left the institution two years ago are still listed. The 10-year-old science lab is still described as the most modern and best-equipped in the state. Prospective students accept this information in good faith and weigh it in their college decision, only to find that the reality does not live up to the expectation.

This chapter identifies areas of information about academic programs and college services that previous research and the experience of Project CHOICE indicate are important for students to know. Secondly, the chapter provides examples of how some colleges report this type of data. Lastly, the politics of trying to improve campus information, particularly regarding the academic program, are briefly discussed, and a technique for building faculty consensus on the information to be provided is offered.

A. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

What information about academic programs can help students in their choice of colleges? The answer to this comes from several sources. A number of studies have asked college students what they found useful and what they actually used in making a college choice (Chapman and Johnson, 1979; Lenning and Cooper, 1977). Another source is federal legislation and regulations concerned with student consumer information. Figure 1 provides a list of information items that are important for students to have. It is not complete, but it is a good start. You may have other items to add to the list.

The following paragraphs provide a closer look at just a few of these areas:

Program admissions requirements. In some institutions, admission to the college and admission to a particular program of study, such as architecture or nursing, are separate and sometimes independent decisions. If a program has special criteria for admissions that differ from those of the college, these need to be very clearly explained.

Description of courses offered. Is the short description of the course that appears in a catalog an accurate statement of what the course really covers? Often the catalog gets routinely reprinted even though current course content has been updated and modified to reflect changing faculty interest. Consequently, students may be attracted to a college by a promise of courses that are, in fact, quite different from the printed description.

Frequency that courses are taught. Listing the availability of courses without indicating how often they are taught may make a curriculum look more comprehensive than it really is. Even the promise that a particular course is offered any semester in which 15 students wish to take it fails to communicate the real likelihood of the course being available. One useful type of information, then, is to indicate how often the course has actually been offered in the last four years and the most recent semester in which it was offered. It also provides a mechanism for identifying courses that should no longer be listed in the catalog. One college, reviewing its course offerings as part of an information improvement project, found some courses listed several years after they had been officially discontinued.

Class size. Large classes are a frequent complaint among new students. The problem is that they expect something smaller, often based on what the institution has said about average class size. Average class size can be misleading if the averaging does not distinguish between the different levels of study (e.g., freshmen, sophomore, and so on). A student is interested in knowing whether an average class size of 22 is a result of 25 freshmen and 20 seniors in a class, or classes of 80 freshmen and 10 seniors.

FIGURE 1: INFORMATION ON THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM IMPORTANT FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS TO KNOW

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1. Requirements for admission to a program of study (if different than general requirements for admission to the institution)
2. Course and/or distributional requirements for graduation
3. An accurate description of the courses offered
4. The frequency with which the courses are offered
5. The type of instruction typically provided (independent study, PSI, lectures, and so on.)
6. Student/faculty ratios and the average size of classes at different levels of study (i.e., freshman, sophomore, and so on, as appropriate)
7. An accurate and current list of the teaching staff and their credentials
8. Adequacy of the facilities, if relevant to the instruction (e.g., science, physical therapy, and the like)
9. Any special costs associated with the program
10. The grading and evaluation system and special grading options (e.g. pass-fail)
11. The standards that a student must maintain to remain eligible for continued attendance at the institution or in a particular area of study
12. Significant anticipated changes in the institution's curricula or completion requirements
13. Probable or possible limitations upon the ability of graduates to take licensing or other examinations for any occupation or profession for which training is offered

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Instructional method. Different instructional methods can make very different demands on the student. Courses that involve self-paced instruction, television lectures, or heavy emphasis on independent study should be described in those terms. Different students respond differently to these instructional treatments. Careful description of what a student should expect will not eliminate mismatches of student and instructional treatment; it can, however, improve student selection and help minimize unpleasant surprises for both the student and the instructor.

Other curricular opportunities. Increasingly, colleges are entering into cooperative arrangements with other institutions in which a student enrolled at one institution can take courses at other colleges in the area. Although these opportunities offer many advantages to the student, the college needs to provide a realistic assessment of the problems of participating in such a program. For example, a liberal arts college in the Chicago area described a cooperative program with another college through which students can study nursing. It failed to mention that the cooperating college was 17 miles away, bus service is infrequent, and students are on their own to arrange transportation. The following example, from a midwestern college, describes a program through which students can earn two degrees. Although fairly explicit, it could be improved by a more complete description of "satisfactory work."

> "Attention is also directed to the arrangements which have been made with State University, the University of , and the State University for a joint program which enables a student to earn two degrees....Under this program a student will take his first three years of residence at and complete ninety-four hours of credit as prescribed by the Department. The group requirements as listed in this catalog will also be met. Provided satisfactory work is done, the student will then be eligible to transfer to State University, the University of or the State University. Upon the completion of thirty additional hours of satisfactory upper level work at one of the institutions listed above, the student will receive bachelor's degree from . After the completion of the requirements of the engineering school to which the student transfers, the Bachelor of Science degree in the field of engineering will be conferred. Normally the time for the program is five years, but this will be dependent to a certain extent on the particular field of engineering chosen."

Course requirements. Many colleges require students to enroll in particular courses or to select a set of courses from predefined alternatives. These requirements need to be explicit. Even when there are no required portions of the curriculum, prospective students may find it helpful to know how enrolled students structure their program. A section of the Barat College Prospectus provides a good illustration (see next page).

Special costs. Courses in certain programs of study, such as music, ceramics, and arts, may require special fees. These need to be clearly stated in a way that encourages students to build the fees into their overall college budget. For example:

> "There are no fees for courses in the theory of private instruction or in class instruction.
>
> The following charges are made each semester for private instruction in voice, piano, violin, cello, harp, organ, or other instruments.
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | One hour's credit (one 30-minute private lesson period per week, minimum one hour's daily practice) . . . . | $18 |
> | Two hours' credit (two 30-minute private lesson periods per week, minimum two hours' daily practice) . . . . | $35 |
>
> These fees are payable in advance at the time of registration. Music fees will not be refunded."

B. COLLEGE SERVICES

In the view of enrolled students, prospective students, and their parents and counselors, information on the availability and extent of general student services (e.g., advising, health service, placement, and the like) ranks among the top 10 most important items of information that should be available to students choosing a college (Lenning and Cooper, 1977). Such information, in addition to describing the services, should indicate restrictions or limitations on their use (e.g., their availability to part-time students). Special fees for use of these services should be indicated. If major services must be sought outside the college, these should be identified (Stark and Terenzini, 1978). If students depend heavily on off-campus housing, the availability and cost of such housing should be described.

"The College believes that individual program planning. . . . is an approach especially suited to Barat's small size and concern for personal development."

Individual Program Planning. Most colleges require their students to begin collegiate work with a list of specified courses or areas of study.

At Barat the approach has been that different student backgrounds, ability levels, interests, and future plans call for differences in what given students might be studying at a given time. The college believes that individual program planning—which requires that students be known as individuals and demands a high faculty commitment to careful advisement—is an approach especially suited to Barat's small size and concern for personal development. It believes that student initiative and self-responsibility are better achieved by involving students directly in the design of their own programs, that a course of study talked over, backed by reasons, and ultimately self-chosen heightens commitment to studies and achievement in them.

Significantly, this approach considerably eases the entry into the college of transfer and continuing education students: these new entrants can design programs of study on the basis of their current needs and objectives, without regard to a pre-set list of required courses.

Sequence of Studies. In many colleges, students devote the "lower division" years—the freshman and sophomore—to required courses and to shopping for a major. As "upper division" juniors and seniors, they complete requirements for a major.

At Barat, special emphasis is given the freshman and senior years, and majors are often done in the sophomore-junior period. Through individual program planning and special coursework, the attempt is to create for freshmen an initial experience of college which engages their interest and energies and provides a solid basis for academic work to come. In the senior year, there are opportunities to pull together and see the relatedness of prior work, and for internships which connect academic preparation with world-of-work realities.

Moving the period for concentration on a major forward to the sophomore-junior years, beyond freeing the senior, allows an earlier start of majors. Barat's concept is that if a person comes to college with sociology or English as her interest, something may be lost by delaying until the junior year the chance to pursue it in earnest.

What Students Actually Do. Even without requirements forcing students to take coursework across a variety of areas, most do so anyway. A study of the 1979 graduating class showed that almost all students had taken English, 96% coursework in the social sciences, 80% in the natural sciences, and about 50% each in history, foreign languages, and religious studies.

As to the sequence of studies, many, but far from all, students follow the college's preferred freshman-year/major/senior-year sequence. Some students, sure of their major, plunge into it during freshman year; others put off choice until they are juniors. Such alternatives of pattern are permitted, not uncommon, and often wise.

Requirements and Expectations. The spirit of freedom and flexibility in curricular matters manifest at Barat should not be interpreted by the student to mean "easier" or "lower standards." If anything, individual program planning puts higher demands on the student: that she assess options, make choices, give reasons, then follow through on her responsibility.

Similarly, just as students have expectations of a college, Barat has expectations of its students. You may not have to take a course in English, but you'll hear the case for writing skills during advisement and demands for them from teachers. Faculty expect students to range widely across different subject areas in their studies; develop advanced communication and quantitative skills; undertake challenging course schedules; and complete course assignments promptly, honestly, and at a high level of accomplishment.

Outcomes of Learning.
Given Barat's curricular approach, how much hard knowledge do its students actually acquire?

New research offers comparative data very much to the point. Thirty-five Barat students took as freshmen and then as seniors the Undergraduate Program examinations for subject-matter knowledge. At entrance, they scored on the 59th percentile for humanities knowledge as against freshmen in all colleges; as seniors, they finished in the 75th percentile on the national norms for seniors. In exams testing knowledge in the social sciences, these students climbed from the 49th to the 60th percentile.

From Barat College Prospectus 1979/81

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In assessing the accuracy of the information a college already provides, enrolled students, as primary users of these services, are valuable sources of information. For example, Portland State University, as part of its work with the National Task Force, developed a chart based on enrolled students' ratings of student services as a means of describing the adequacy of these services to prospective students.

Ratings of Support Services

ABOVE AVERAGE SATISFACTION

- Library
- Programs for the Disadvantaged
- Financial Aid Services
- Recreational Opportunities
- Information Received Before Enrolling
- Ability to Get Classes Needed
- Ease of Payment Procedures

AVERAGE SATISFACTION

- Academic Advising
- Career Counseling
- Study Skill Development
- Personal Counseling
- Campus Security
- Parking/Transportation
- Availability of Classes at Convenient Time

BELOW AVERAGE SATISFACTION

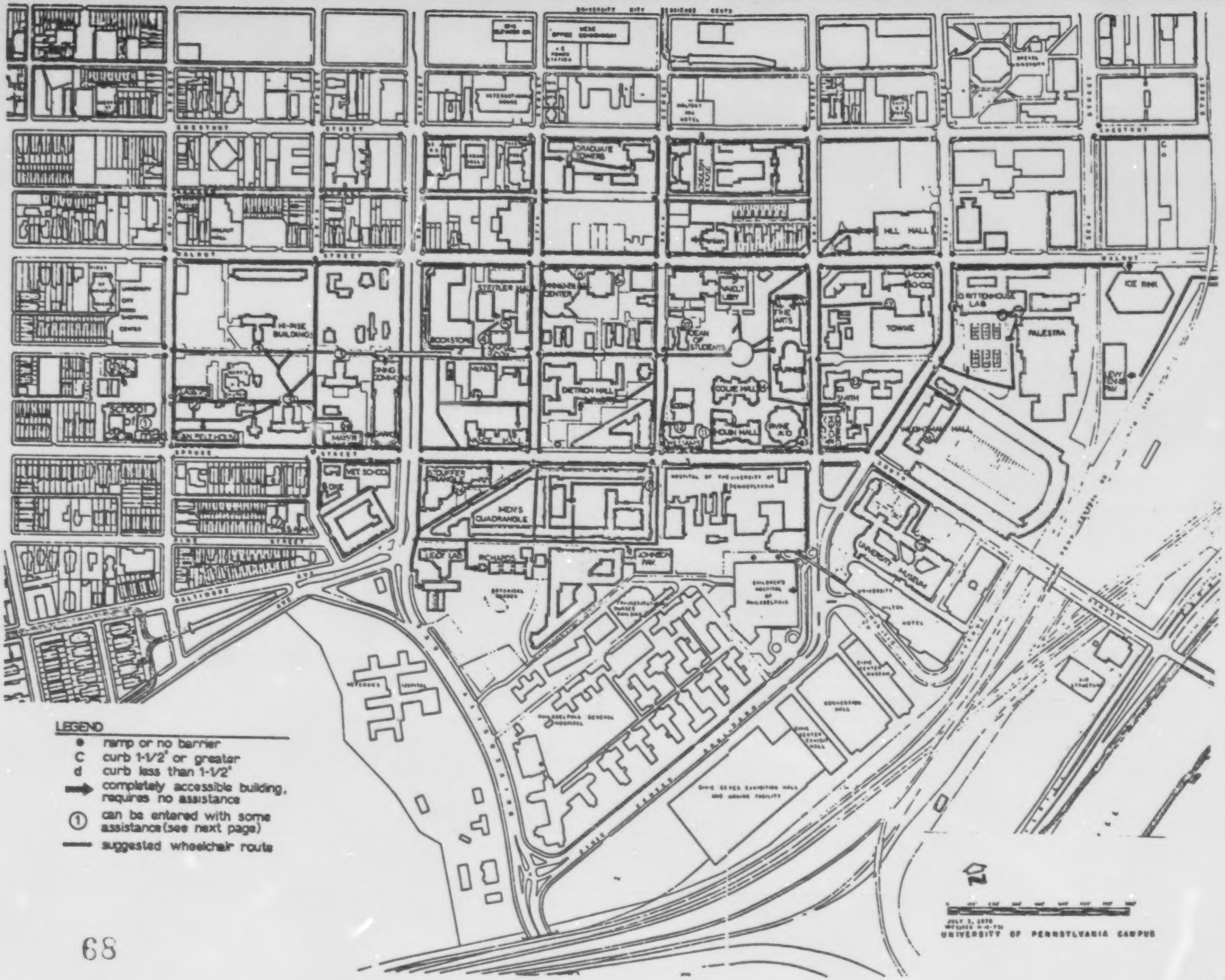
- University-operated Food Service
- Social Opportunities
- Opportunities for Participation in Campus Governance

Abstracted from random sample of 283 undergraduates enrolled at Portland State University in Winter, 1976.

It is especially important that a college's information respond to the information needs of special groups of students, such as the handicapped or those likely to need special academic advising and support services. One excellent example of such information is a campus map designating facilities for the handicapped (e.g., ramp entrances to buildings, buildings with elevators, toilet facilities in each building). It also indicates the best wheelchair routes across campus and identifies particularly steep slopes or high curves.

C. THE POLITICS OF DEVELOPING BETTER INFORMATION

Collecting and reporting information on academic programs and services can be a political activity. Different academic departments, administrative offices, and campus groups are apt to disagree over how much and what type of information to share. For example, when one college decided to report the number of teaching faculty and number of students majoring in each department, a professor in one department objected. He was the only faculty member in a department that had very few majors. The department primarily provided service courses for other majors. However, if that were reported, he argued, prospective students interested in majoring in his area would go elsewhere and he never would be able to build up his department. There was no question of this professor's ability or the quality of the courses he offered. Still, he felt that


GRADUATE TOWERS
HILL HALL
STEITLER HALL
HI-RISE BUILDINGS
BOOKSTORE
DEAN OF STUDENTS
FINE ARTS
TOWNE
RITTENHOUSE LAB
PALESTRA
ICE RINK
DIETRICH HALL
COLLEGE HALL
IRVINE AUD
SMITH
WEIGHTMAN HALL
VAN PELT HOUSE
VET. SCHOOL
STOUFFER TRIANGLE
MEN'S QUADRANGLE
RICHARDS
JOHNSON PAV.
UNIVERSITY MUSEUM
LEGEND
● ramp or no barrier
C curb 1-1/2" or greater
d curb less than 1-1/2"
➡ completely accessible building, requires no assistance
① can be entered with some assistance(see next page)
— suggested wheelchair routs
N
JULY 1, 1970
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA CAMPUS

reporting the size of the department could cause harm. The point is that even seemingly innocent information can generate disagreement.

Deleting incorrect information from a publication can be equally difficult. For example, one professor pointed out that getting courses approved by the faculty can be so difficult that once a course is on the books, faculty are reluctant to drop it, even if it is not currently taught. Not only can reporting information be political, but collecting it can be an issue of concern, especially when the information may include students' or graduates' evaluation of their experience. Who will decide what questions get asked? Who will see the data when they are compiled? Who will decide what gets shared with prospective students or other audiences?

The problem is often more complicated when a college attempts to report information that is openly negative. How many colleges would be willing to say, "If you want to major in mathematics (or biology, or whatever) we encourage you to look elsewhere," even if that view is well-documented and widely shared on campus? Is it really necessary to report negative findings? There is no clear answer to that. Certainly better information does not have to mean presenting negative information. There are times, however, when an institution may collect negative information that is quite important to good college decisions. At those times, the pressures for student recruitment may be at odds with the concern for accurate and complete student information. The time to confront these issues is very early in the process of information improvement. As the earlier chapters have stressed, there needs to be widespread participation of the key campus leadership in the planning of a campus information project, visibility of the project on campus, and top administrative support. Even with this, there will be disagreement. There are techniques, however, that might be of help in developing consensus.

Developing Consensus on What Will be Reported. Faculty need to understand what information is important to prospective students and why. Likewise, widespread knowledge and involvement of faculty early in the campus review process is often helpful. Indeed, it is often important for the various faculty and administrator constituencies to agree on what information they would like to have presented even before the specific details are known. If, for example, all of the department chairpersons can agree that certain facts will be presented and agree on a similar format to present those facts, then the specific information, once available, can be plugged in accordingly. This can help minimize argument about the negative aspects of the data. Figure 2 provides examples of

FIGURE 2: BRIEF EXAMPLES OF CONTENT OUTLINES TO BE AGREED UPON BEFORE SPECIFIC DATA ARE INSERTED

Students majoring in ____________ have an average composite SAT score of ____________ and an average overall grade point average of ____________.

An average of ___________ students per year for the last five years have graduated with majors in this department. Of those individuals _____________ completed their program in four years.

This department has _________ full-time and _________ part-time faculty. For the past _________ years, an average of _________ different courses have been offered each year with an average enrollment of _______ in the lower division and _________ in the upper division courses.

Of the students graduating with degrees in _________, _______ percent go on to graduate school, _________ percent enter the job market immediately after graduation.

In a recent survey of students, _________ percent report faculty in this department are accessible, ________ percent indicated they believe the faculty are interested in the student, ________ percent rate the courses in this department to be stimulating...

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these types of statements. The examples are offered only as illustrations of a method. Your faculty will want to develop their own statements. Whatever the particular statement, agreements on the nature of the information to be provided before the specific items are available can expedite reporting the data better.

SUMMARY

This chapter was offered as a beginning point for those who may undertake an information improvement project on their own campus. The chapter argued that information on a college's academic program and student services must be examined in any effort to improve student information. Types of information students say are important in college choice were identified and examples of how some colleges have presented that information were provided. Lastly, faculty concerns that may be encountered in trying to modify the way a college describes itself were discussed. One technique for developing faculty consensus was described.

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V. IMPROVING INFORMATION ON EDUCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Jeannine A. Harrold
Career Analyst
Ball State University

If I major in history, will I be able to get a job? If I major in marketing at this college, what are my chances of being able to find employment in an area related to marketing? What can I do with a degree in the liberal arts?

These are a few of the questions that students ask in the process of choosing a college and later in selecting a major area of study. This is especially true in areas of professional study. However, even those pursuing the liberal arts tend to cast one eye to the future. Increasingly, students want to know about the life experiences and employment opportunities they might reasonably expect to follow from their educational investment. One way to respond to these questions is in terms of what previous students have experienced after graduation. For example, what kinds of jobs do those who majored in history over the last 10 years actually hold? How many graduates in marketing have, in fact, found jobs in marketing? This approach does not try to predict the future for prospective students; it identifies the range of employment alternatives that have been available to those who have previously shared in the educational experience provided by a particular college or academic department.

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES: WHAT ARE THEY? WHAT DO STUDENTS WANT TO KNOW?

Defining educational and employment outcomes (an innocent sounding subject) has created nearly as much controversy in higher education circles as trying to explain to employers the difference between goals and quotas in affirmative action programs. Although the debate surrounding the topic has been fairly active for the past 10 years, the frequency with which it has highlighted cocktail party and dinner table conversations has increased tremendously during the 1970's, since more people are becoming involved in higher education. Essentially, the outcomes we are interested in here refer to the consequences of a student's enrollment in an educational institution and involvement in its programs (NCHEMS, 1976).

Much has been learned about student outcomes in the past 10 years. Some outcomes are planned; others occur accidentally. Some are fairly easy to measure, such as completing a specific program, while others are more difficult, such as the learned

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ability to think and solve problems. Some outcomes may be described as changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes, but others simply preserve certain levels of the same qualities in students. Clearly there are sharp disagreements about which outcomes of education are important and which should be presented to prospective students to help them in their college choice.

Considerable research, however, has examined what prospective and enrolled students say is important to know. They believe it is important to know if previous graduates were able to find employment upon graduation, the success of those graduates in getting jobs related to their field of training, and their success in passing certification and licensing examinations. They are interested in previous graduates' success in gaining admission to graduate and professional schools and the success of those students once admitted. And, they are interested in previous graduates' satisfaction with their jobs and the extent to which the college placement office was helpful in the job search. Some prospective students were interested in whether previous graduates were satisfied, overall, with their college experiences (Stark and Terenzini, 1978; Lenning and Cooper, 1977). Basically, three categories of outcomes appear to be important to students confronted with choosing a college: career related outcomes, likelihood of admission to more advanced education, and personal growth outcomes (Stark and Terenzini, 1978).

Students are not the only audience for this type of information. College faculty have also indicated a strong interest in knowing more about the outcomes of students' college experiences. However, there seems to be a great amount of disagreement among faculty over which is the most important outcome of college attendance. The importance they attach to different educational outcomes appears to vary according to their background, academic field, educational philosophy, and type of institutional setting.

In a 1978 report of a National Center for Higher Education Management Systems study conducted in 1976 (Romney, 1978) faculty, administrators, and trustees at 45 American colleges and universities were surveyed concerning the establishment of institutional goals and the methods by which progress toward those goals should be assessed. Those measurable student outcomes considered most important by faculty in this study are: student ability to apply knowledge; the continuing active intellectual involvement of former students in other than formal, advanced study; students' expression of concern for human welfare and well-being; employer satisfaction with former students' vocational or professional training; and scholarly works produced or published by former students.

Accrediting agencies comprise a third audience of information on outcomes. One area of concern within the accrediting process is how the activities of educational programs relate to desired student outcomes. The need for the measurement of educational outcomes is emphasized (North Central Association, 1977).

Even beyond the accrediting agencies, state commissions and governing boards are increasingly concerned with how the state's limited resources are spent. In Indiana, for example, colleges and universities are participating in a series of program reviews for the Indiana Commission for Higher Education. To determine both the value and quality of individual academic programs within a department, the Commission designed the "Minimal Set of Information Needs from Reviews of Existing Programs" (Ball State University, 1979). Part of the information requested from each department is evidence that the program provides a particular type of educational experience, with data regarding graduates of each program.

In summary, both prospective and enrolled students report that information on the outcomes of higher education are important in selecting a college and, subsequently, in selecting a major. Other groups--faculty, accrediting associations, state higher education coordinating boards--are also interested in this type of information. However, these groups often differ as to the particular information that should be collected or shared.

PRESENTING INFORMATION ON GRADUATE OUTCOMES

There are many ways to present the information that will be collected in a survey of alumni. Insofar as possible, the decisions should be made before actually collecting the data. Agreements on what information is important for prospective students to know should be reached prior to the discussion of what alumni actually say. This approach helps guide the decision of what information to collect. It also helps insulate the interpretation of the data from possible displeasure with the specifics of the data once collected.

Several examples illustrate different ways in which CHOICE colleges have chosen to report data on their alumni.

Example 1: Example 1 was developed as a response to questions about what kinds of employment students majoring in different areas might expect to find. It reports graduates' employment by their major areas of study. Using this particular example, the college could point out that students majoring in liberal arts tended to find employment in many different occupational

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Example 1: Types of Employment Found by Previous Students Who Major in Selected Fields

Alumni who majored in the following areas report they are employed as follows:

ENGLISH (42 ALUMNI)

Number of Alumni	Type of Employment
9	High School Teacher
6	Administrator, Education
5	Administrator, Business
3	Sales (wholesale or manufacturing)
2	Administrator, Government
2	Sales Manager
one each:	Accountant, Actor/Actress, Computer Programmer, Career/Employment Counselor, Horticulturist, Lawyer, Newspaper Reporter, Personnel, Publications/Publicity, Social Worker, Elementary School Teacher, College Teacher, Special or Other Teacher, Secretary- Machine Operator.

ECONOMICS (54 ALUMNI)

Number of Alumni	Type of Employment
9	Bank Officer
8	Administrator, Business
8	Sales Manager
4	Accountant
3	Administrator, Government
3	Computer Programmer
3	Economist (not teaching)
3	Insurance Agent
3	Sales (wholesale or manufacturing)
2	Counselor, School or Guidance
2	Lawyer
2	Police Officer
one each:	Clergy, Social Worker, Elementary School Teacher, College Teacher.

MARKETING (55 ALUMNI)

Number of Alumni	Type of Employment
10	Administrator, Business
7	Sales Manager
5	Sales (wholesale or manufacturing)
3	Market Researcher
3	Real Estate Agent
2	Administrator, Government
2	Advertising Manager
2	Bank Officer
2	Buyer
2	Computer Programmer
2	Career/Employment Counselor
2	High School Teacher
2	College Teacher
one each:	Accountant, Biological Sciences (not teaching) Business Management Trainee, School/Guidance Counselor, Personnel, Social Worker, Elementary School Teacher, Writer, Sales Clerk, Securities Sales

HISTORY (72 ALUMNI)

Number of Alumni	Type of Employment
13	High School Teacher
8	Elementary School Teacher
6	Lawyer
5	College Teacher
4	Insurance Agent
4	Administrator, Government
3	Administrator, Business
3	Administrator, Education
3	Sales Manager
2	Social Worker
2	Computer Programmer
2	Special/Other Teacher
2	Personnel
2	Writer
2	Sales (wholesale or manufacturing)
one each:	Buyer, Career/Employment Counselor, Clergy, Market Researcher, Military Service, Public Relations, Police Officer, Unemployed

Example 1 (Cont.)

BIOLOGY (21 ALUMNI)

Number of Alumni	Type of Employment
8	Physician/Psychiatrist
2	Dentist
2	High School Teacher
one each:	Administrator of Hospital or Health Service, Advertising Manager, Biological Scientist (not teaching) Chemist (not teaching), Lawyer, Registered Nurse, Public Relations/ Publicity, College Teacher, Sales (wholesale or manufacturing)

PSYCHOLOGY (31 ALUMNI)

Number of Alumni	Type of Employment
6	Psychologists (not teaching)
3	Administrator, Business
2	Administrator, Education
2	Administrator, Hospital/Health & Service
2	Computer Programmer
2	Social Worker
2	Sales (wholesale or manufacturing)
one each:	Accountant, Buyer, Clergy, School/Guidance Counselor, Personnel, Public Relations, Physician/ Psychiatrist, Sales Manager, High School Teacher, Special/Other Teacher, Advertising Agent

areas. On the other hand, of the 21 biology graduates who completed the questionnaire, over half have careers in medical science (physicians, dentists, research scientists). Graduates who had majored in marketing tended to find employment in areas related to business and marketing. By examining this type of information, a prospective student can get a clearer idea of the range of employment opportunities associated with different programs of study.

Example 2: Example 2 was developed by Southside Virginia Community College. Southside was interested in showing prospective students and their parents that its graduates tended to remain in the local area and, in relation to the local economy, its graduates tended to earn respectable salaries. After surveying 1978 graduates with a questionnaire developed on campus, Southside designed a short brochure entitled "Looking Forward." This brochure presented information on location of employment and starting salary (presented here) and included a listing of major employers in the area. It also reported the mean first-term grade point average of graduates who had continued their education at a senior institution.

Example 3: Example 3 illustrates another way of presenting outcomes information: selective highlighting of findings that are of particular interest. The audience for this particular data, however, was not prospective or enrolled students, but faculty and administrators.

Example 4: Example 4 illustrates how one institution incorporated outcomes information in recruitment literature developed at a departmental level. At Ball State University, the Department of Social Work annually surveys all graduates of the department to determine their success in finding suitable employment, salaries received, amount of time needed to find jobs, satisfaction with educational preparation and employment, and plans for further education. This information is published through the Office of Career Analyst and shared with high school students, guidance offices, libraries, state employment offices, prospective and admitted Ball State students. The "Careers in Social Work" profile is the major document used for this purpose. One portion of that document is presented in Example 4.

CONSIDERATIONS IN PLANNING OUTCOMES STUDIES

One of the first issues to face on every campus is the political climate for conducting a student outcomes survey. As discussed earlier, there are many potential clientele for the data that may be collected and these clientele may disagree on what is important to collect or to share with others. At

Example 2

Table I

Location of Employment - Spring 1978 Graduates

Where Employed	Programs			
	AA & AS	AAS	Certificate	Diploma
In-Service Area*	3	23	43	8
In Virginia	4	40	51	12
Out-of-State	0	6	3	2

Explanation: There are 3 students that completed AA & AS degrees that are currently living in the service area.

- An overwhelming majority of 1978 graduates work within the state of Virginia. For those responding, 90.7% (107 of 118) list that they are working in state.
- Over half, 71.9% (77 of 107), of those individuals working in state have jobs in SVCC's service area.
- Only 11 individuals (out of 118) report that they are working at jobs out of state after graduating in 1978.
- SVCC graduates, serving in a variety of jobs, are important human resources for the region in and around Southside, as well as the entire state.

* The cities of Emporia and South Boston (partial) and the counties of Brunswick, Buckingham (partial), Charlotte, Cumberland, Greensville, Halifax (partial), Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway and Prince Edward.

Table II

Starting Salaries - Spring 1978 Graduates

Starting Salary	Programs			
	AA & AS	AAS	Certificate	Diploma
Below $5,000	3	4	10	0
$ 5,000- 6,999	0	10	15	2
$ 7,000- 8,999	2	10	13	2
$ 9,000-10,999	0	10	9	7
$11,000-14,999	1	8	7	3
$15,000 & over	0	3	1	0

Explanation: Three (3) students that completed AA or AS degrees report current salaries below $5,000.

- The median reported salary for Spring 1978 graduates was in the $7,000 to $8,999 range.
- Approximately half of those with AAS degrees reported starting salaries greater than $9,000.

- Because many of those that receive AA or AS degrees go on to four-year institutions, few in these categories list salary information.

- A large percentage (44%) of those receiving certificates reported a starting salary within the $7,000 to $11,000 range.

- Few people reported starting salaries at either the high end or the low end of the salary range listed.

Example 3

Selected Findings of the Graduate Survey

Graduates' Employment

- * Approximately 59% of all Graduates held a different job after receiving their Degree than they did before.

- * Employment Status:
  Full-time -- 80%
  Part-time -- 11%
  Not Employed -- 9%

- * Satisfaction with present employment
  -- 24% Extremely Satisfied
  -- 45% Very Satisfied
  27% Somewhat Satisfied
  4% Not At All Satisfied

- * Individual Income (Mode): $12,000 - $14,999

- * Family Income (Mode): $21,000 - $23,900

- * 64% of the Graduates feel that their skills are well utilized in their employment.

- * Approximately 30% of all Graduates had a part-time or summer job related to their present employment.

- * The three biggest problems in finding a satisfying job after graduation were:
  1. Finding a job with desirable Characteristics (salary, setting, etc.)
  2. A tight job market in my field
  3. A generally tight job market

- * The two least problems faced in finding a satisfying job were:
  1. Racial Discrimination
  2. Sex Discrimination

- * Over 61% of all Graduates were either Extremely or Very Satisfied with their progress in their career.

Choice of College

- * The four most important reasons for attending this institution included:
  1. Location - Near Home
  2. Affiliation with Indiana - Purdue Universities System
  3. Reputation of program
  4. Inexpensive

Graduates Ratings of their Educational Experience

- * Less than 3% of all Graduates found their major program at this instituion not satisfactory relevant to career goals.

- * 3.2% found the quality of instruction not at all satisfactory. Over 70% found the quality of instruction to be either Extremely or Very Satisfactory.

- * Overall, 71% of all Graduates were either Extremely or Very Satisfied with the education they received at this campus.

- * When asked, "Given what you know now would you enroll in the same Degree Program?", 82% responded YES.

Example 4

Selected Portion of "Careers in Social Work"

DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION:	The department arranges field trips, speakers, and visits to agencies in which social work is practiced in conjunction with course work. The Bracken Library has 2400 separate titles of basic social work books and periodicals. The Social Work Club consisting of social work majors engaged in a variety of programs designed to supplement their educational experiences at Ball State University. The social work program offered by the Department of Social Work is accredited by the Accreditation Commission of the Council on Social Work Education which sets the standards for all social work education in the United States. Staffed by a faculty of seven full-time persons, the department consists of over 300 majors.
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:	In the Ball State Class of 1978, 67% of the respondents reported having full-time employment in human services, and 73% found employment within four months from graduation.
SALARIES, EARNINGS, AND ADVANCEMENT:	The 1978 Ball State Social Work graduates reported salaries as follows: 67 percent earned \$8,000 to \$12,000 annually; 10 percent earned in excess of \$12,000. The average salary for social workers reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the same period of time was \$9,500 for bachelors candidates.

the same time, the potential interest of varied individuals or groups can provide support for the study, both political and financial. If an institution is going to engage in large-scale data collection, it makes sense to collect data that respond to the needs of several offices. Consequently, careful planning and involvement of others on campus is essential. This planning must include agreement on the goals and objectives of the study, the questionnaire to be used, and the sample of graduates to be contacted. It must also involve clear decisions about who controls the data once they have been collected, who gets to use them, and the manner in which they will be analyzed and reported. Unfortunately, it is not unusual for institutions to collect survey data and never distribute the results. For interpretations to be both timely and meaningful, the important users of the data should be identified and the kinds of information each will need should be decided.

Another major issue in the planning is the cost of such a study. The availability of financial support will often dictate the way in which some of the other issues are considered. The costs of such a study will vary depending on the method of survey selected; however, they could include any or all of the items identified in Figure 1. Another issue is scheduling. The experience of most of the CHOICE colleges undertaking an alumni study was that the study took longer than planned. This usually occurred because agreement on the items to be asked took longer than expected at the beginning of the study and the computer analysis took longer than expected after the data were collected.

Once these issues have been considered, the next issue is apt to be whether the institution should develop its own survey or purchase a service from an agency capable of providing necessary support.

COLLECTING DATA ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Data from the placement office, although widely available at most colleges and universities, are usually based solely upon those students who used the college placement service and who reported their job offers. This is not considered an adequate source of data on graduates' careers. Graduate surveys conducted by academic departments for purposes of the accrediting review or as a reporting requirement for federal grants may be helpful to students considering programs in those departments. However, these studies seldom provide an overall picture of the institution. Unfortunately, efforts of colleges to do comprehensive alumni (graduate outcomes) studies have often encountered difficulty. The disagreements mentioned earlier

FIGURE 1: POSSIBLE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH A SURVEY OF ALUMNI

Project Director

Secretarial Assistance (typing questionnaire, cover letter, final reports)

Printing Questionnaires

Envelopes & Stationery

Mailing Labels

Stuffing Envelopes

Outgoing and Return Postage

Cost of Follow-up Mailing (estimate that 60% of your original sample will have to be sent a second questionnaire)

Recording and Tracking Returned Forms

Coding Returned Questionnaire Data Onto Computer Coding Sheets

Keypunching Data from Computer Coding Sheets

Computer Analysis

Computer Personnel Costs

Preparation and Distribution of Final Report

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over what is important information to collect and/or share have often slowed down or sidetracked college efforts to design an alumni questionnaire. Likewise, few college administrators have experience in conducting large-scale survey research.

To help colleges respond to some of these problems, a number of organizations have developed questionnaires and procedures for collecting graduate outcome information. One of the questionnaires was developed through the Task Force on Better Information for Student Choice by the Associated Colleges of the Midwest, a consortium of 11 liberal arts colleges. Approximately 3,000 members of the graduating classes of 1975 and another 3,000 graduates from the combined classes of 1960, 1965, and 1970 were surveyed. Responses came from 61 percent of the 1975 graduates and 51 percent of the earlier graduates. The ACM recognized that its member colleges had little information on career patterns of their graduates; therefore, its survey probed employment and career patterns, earnings, job satisfaction, and the extent to which the respondents developed certain personal skills and competencies considered necessary for success in their chosen endeavors (Stark, 1978). Although specifically developed for liberal arts colleges, the questionnaire used by ACM is applicable to a wide range of student and college types.

Currently, the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems and the College Board are jointly sponsoring the Student Outcomes Information Services (SOIS), which feature five questionnaires developed and field-tested during 1976 and 1977 (NCHEMS, 1979). The primary emphasis of the SOIS is to provide information about student outcomes from the postsecondary education process. The student outcomes questionnaires collect information on students' backgrounds, goals, aspirations, attitudes, satisfactions, decision-making criteria, activities, educational plans and accomplishments, and career choices and successes. A standard instrument available for purchase, the Student-Outcomes Questionnaires allow for the addition of up to 15 locally developed items that can be analyzed by a Response-Analysis Service.

In 1978, Project CHOICE, in collaboration with the University of Michigan School of Education (Hutcheson and Chapman, 1978), also developed a student outcomes questionnaire. The CHOICE Questionnaire has been modified and adapted for use by five institutions that participated in Project CHOICE. This survey analyzes graduates' educational preparation and satisfaction with the program pursued, current employment status and relative satisfaction with it, plans for future education or employment change, perception of the relationship between educational preparation and current employment. Additional questions deal with the level of satisfaction with university services and programs and request suggestions for change or improvement. A copy of this questionnaire is provided in Part 4 of Chapter VI.

The Graduate Follow-Up Questionnaire (GFQ), developed by Empire State College in New York State, was developed as part of a multiple perspective's approach to assessing student learning, program effectiveness, and program cost (Palola, Lehmann, Bradley, and Debus, 1977). The GFQ collects general information (age, sex, area of study), information on further study, graduate school experiences, present employment, and graduates' evaluation of their Empire State College experience.

One thing the above-mentioned surveys have in common is adaptability and applicability. Institutions considering conducting their own outcomes studies should review all of these programs to determine if one or more might be suitable, in whole or part, for their own purposes.

In designing an outcomes study, there are two additional works that should be examined. Four Critical Years by Alexander Astin (1979) reports the results of one of the largest national studies of recent graduates ever conducted. Longitudinal data on over 200,000 students were collected during a 10-year period. Astin's research examined recent graduates' attitudes, beliefs, self-concepts, satisfaction with college, patterns of behavior, competency and achievement, career development, and the permanence of college effects. The book also provides a good discussion of the conceptual and methodological problems encountered in surveying graduates.

A smaller longitudinal study was supported by The College Placement Council. In this study, Solomon and Bisconti (1977) surveyed students' employment, the relationship between employment and field of study, and graduates' level of job satisfaction. One significant finding is that job satisfaction was not always related to whether or not graduates were employed in the field for which they prepared.

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY: A CASE STUDY

The previous sections have suggested the issues a college will confront in deciding to survey alumni. To help illustrate those issues, it may be helpful to examine the experience of one institution, Ball State University in Muncie, IN. This case study will examine the rationale for undertaking this type of effort, projected and real timetables, resources and services used, budget, and proposed implementation activities.

Ball State is a primarily residential, state-supported university of 17,000 students in central Indiana. The Office of the Career Analyst and the Director of Student Affairs Research at Ball State had been considering conducting an alumni study of some sort for several years, but had never settled upon a model or a method for undertaking the project. In 1978, the university joined Project CHOICE and moved closer to getting the job done. The Career Analyst became part of the CHOICE Team on the BSU campus. Some of the problems normally associated with this type of endeavor were not part of the Ball State experience, because the Career Analyst and the Director of Student Affairs conduct such a study, and the Career Analyst had budget monies available.

The campus team decided to use, with some modifications, the questionnaire developed by Project CHOICE. However, representatives from several offices were asked to review the instrument so that 1) they would know what information was being collected and 2) additional items they might have incorporated. These offices included instructional affairs, academic planning, business office/legislative liaison, publications, and admissions. In addition, consultation and cooperation was gained from the alumni association, which agreed to supply a sampling of names of the graduating classes of 1967, 1972, and 1977, along with mailing labels. The association also agreed to publish the results and analysis in its publication, *The Alumnus*.

One of the most difficult problems was establishing a timetable and operating within that schedule. Figure 2 shows both the projected timetable set before beginning the study and the real schedule to date.

Figure 3 outlines both the real costs and those implied through personnel or related services. Dollar amounts for the latter have not been computed, as those will differ with each setting.

Even before the study was launched, decisions were made regarding who might use the data and how it might be reported. Regarding use and dissemination of results from Ball State's first outcomes study, the decision was made to place control with the Office of Career Analyst. Although summaries will be returned to respondents and highlights will be published in alumni publications and student newspapers, the real impact of the information is expected to be found as it is incorporated into existing admissions publications, career information news, guidance releases, and program review documents.

FIGURE 2: BALL STATE OUTCOMES STUDY TIMETABLES

Projected

November	Review sample questionnaires Make selection
December	Secure sample and mailing labels from Alumni Mail first set of questionnaires
January	Mail follow-up questionnaires
February	Mail returns to CHOICE Headquarters
April	Analyze data and return to Ball State
May	Write report and publish results

Real

December	Review sample questionnaires
January	Make changes, retype survey, prepare copies
January-February	Struggle to obtain good, accurate sample from alumni files for graduating classes of 1967, 1972, and 1977
February 26	Mail 1045 surveys
March 29	Mail 600 follow-up letters and surveys
Early May	Mail returns to CHOICE Headquarters
October	Analyze data and return to Ball State
December	Write report and publish results

FIGURE 3: BALL STATE OUTCOMES STUDY COSTS

Real Costs	
Postage (first class and return envelopes)	$450.00
Letterhead	20.00
Copying	150.00
Word processing supplies	50.00
Address labels	25.00
	$695.00

Implied Costs	
Professional staff time	120 hours
Computer time	no estimate
Secretarial time	100 hours
Word processing	35 hours

SUMMARY

Both prospective and enrolled students say that information on the educational and employment experiences of graduates is important to them as they select a college and/or a major area of study. Three categories of outcomes appear to be particularly important--career related outcomes, likelihood of admission to more advanced education, and personal growth outcomes. This chapter reported how some colleges have chosen to report these types of information. Second, it suggested some of the methodological and political issues a college needs to consider in surveying its alumni. Third, it identified several organizations and agencies that can provide assistance to colleges undertaking this type of study. Last, it presented the experience of one college in conducting a graduate outcomes study.

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VI. RESOURCES FOR ASSISTING CAMPUS INFORMATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

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Project CHOICE
University of Michigan

What resources will I need to undertake a campus information improvement project? Are those resources available for my use? This chapter will answer these questions and identify resources currently available to those considering a campus better information project. The chapter is divided into five parts. Part I identifies the major activities and resources available at each of the six steps identified in the process plan for a campus information improvement project presented in Chapter II. Part II describes the CHOICE Linking Service, a national consulting network of information improvement consultants.* Part III provides a comprehensive bibliography of literature relevant to undertaking a better information project. Part IV presents questionnaire and survey forms that were develcped by CHOICE for use by colleges wishing to collect new information to share with prospective students. The last section lists people and institutions that have been involved with Project CHOICE and/or the National Task Force and who may be of assistance to a college considering a better information project.

Some of the resources identified in this chapter are administrative offices or functions typically found in most institutions. However, due to organizational structure or size, such offices or functions may not be found within your institution. This does not mean that your institution cannot successfully complete a project. Rather, you may have to rely on external resources or identify other individuals on the staff or faculty who have the needed skills.

THE MAJOR INGREDIENT FOR SUCCESS: PLANNING

The experience of Project CHOICE institutions indicates that the key ingredient for success is planning. Planning could be considered the hub of the wheel that carries the organization to its goal (Figure 1). It serves as the foundation through which objectives are defined, resources are identified,

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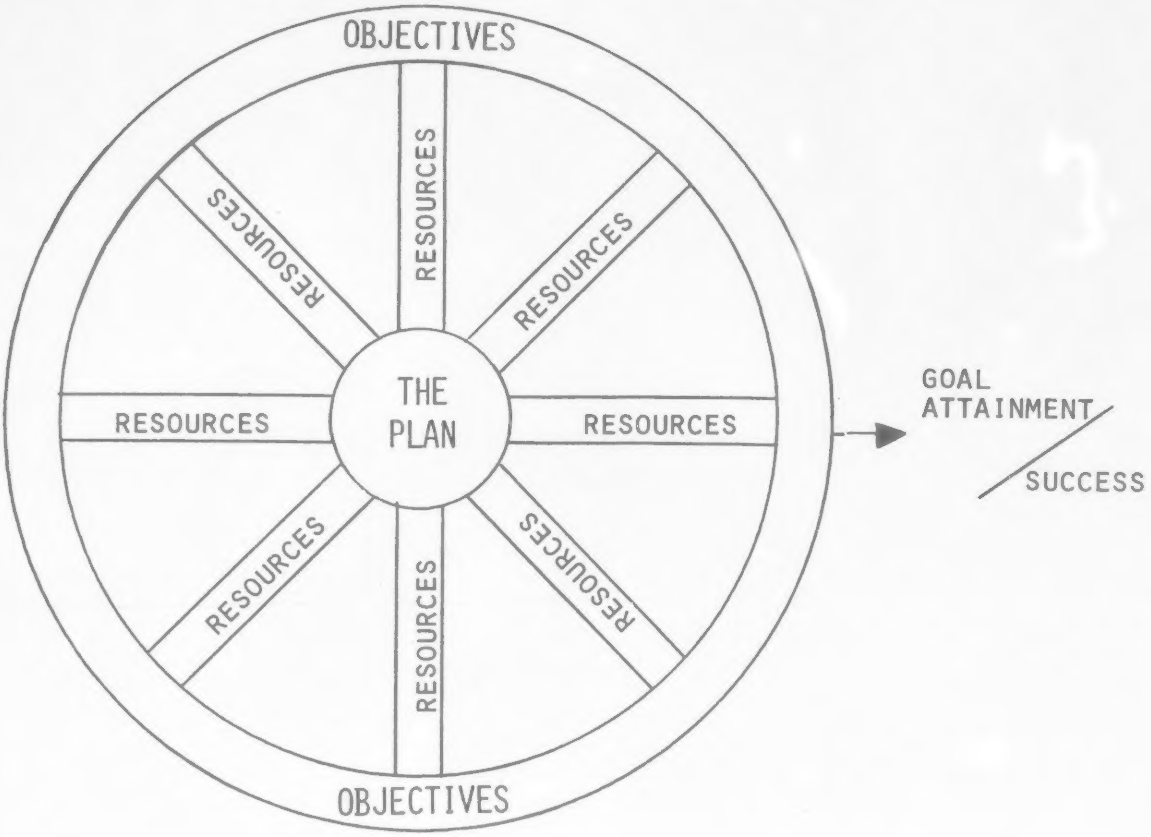
*For information on the availability of CHOICE Services described in this chapter, write to Project CHOICE, 2001 School of Education, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109.

FIGURE 1: PROJECT WHEEL


OBJECTIVES
RESOURCES
RESOURCES
RESOURCES
RESOURCES
THE PLAN
RESOURCES
RESOURCES
RESOURCES
RESOURCES
OBJECTIVES
GOAL ATTAINMENT
SUCCESS

timelines are formulated, and responsibilities are assigned. Without a strong foundation, the wheel can break down and the project has to pull off to the side of the road. A thoughtful and comprehensive plan is a vital resource within an information improvement project. The other resources within the project wheel are represented as spokes. Like the hub, the spokes (i.e., resources) play a large part in determining the strength of the wheel. Objectives cannot be realized unless various resources are identified and marshalled to the job.

Part I. Resources Helpful in the Six-Step Process Plan

In Chapter II, Dr. Angelo presented a six-step process for organizing a campus information improvement project. This section identifies the resources available to a college at each step.

Step 1

Activity: Become familiar with the literature and the meaning of improved information.

Resources

1. Bibliography of better information literature (presented in part III of this chapter.)
2. CHOICE Clearinghouse of student consumer information and models of better information developed by other colleges.
3. The fair practice statements of professional organizations regarding the responsibilities of colleges to students (as an example, see the statement published by the National Association of College Admissions Counselors).
4. The regulations and recommendations regarding student consumer information developed by the government (specifically, note provision 493 A of the 1976 Higher Education Amendments and the proposed student consumer information provisions of the 1980 amendments).
5. CHOICE Linking Service consultants
6. CHOICE staff; members of the National Task Force for Better Information for Student Choice.

Step 2

Activity: Determine the feasibility of completing a better information project on your campus. What types of support and what types of resistance can you expect?

1. College administrators and staff responsible for providing information to students (admissions representatives, registrar, financial aid officer, academic affairs officer, student affairs officer).
2. College administrators and staff with hands-on experience in planning.

3. Linking Service consultants.
4. CHOICE staff; members of the National Task Force.

Step 3

Activity: Obtain institutional commitment to complete the project. This can be accomplished through meetings, workshops, individual conversations, and so on.

1. The president of your institution.
2. Key opinion leaders among the faculty, students, and administrators.
3. The trustees of the college.
4. Linking Service consultants.
5. CHOICE staff; members of the National Task Force.
6. Information from high school guidance counselors on the adequacy of material currently provided by the college to prospective students.

Step 4

Activity: Announce publicly that the institution is going to undertake a better information project. Identify the overall goals of the project.

1. Staff in the Office of Public Relations or News Bureau.
2. Key opinion leaders among faculty, students, and administrators.
3. The faculty senate or governing body.
4. The president of the institution.
5. National organizations that can both encourage your institution and give it publicity.
6. Local newspapers via a press release.

Step 5

Activities: Organize tasks to achieve

1. College staff and faculty that possess energy, creativity, and

anticipated results:	the ability to influence senior campus administrators.
a) Develop a project structure (i.e., individuals, teams, or committees to complete tasks).	2. Staff and faculty that have expertise in survey research and/or needs assessment.
b) Complete needs assessment.	3. The CHOICE Checklist (see Chapter VII).
	4. Surveys and questionnaires designed by CHOICE and available through the clearinghouse; other commercially available surveys and questionnaires (e.g., those from the Educational Testing Service and/or the American College Testing Program).
	5. Linking Service consultants.
	6. CHOICE staff.
c) Design objectives.	7. The completed needs assessment
	8. College staff responsible for providing information to students.
	9. College staff with experience in program planning.
	10. Linking Service consultants.
	11. Project CHOICE staff; members of the National Task Force.
d) Compile new information	12. The college's Office of Institutional Research.
	13. Staff and administrative offices that have already collected data as a part of other activities and projects.
	14. Surveys and questionnaires designed by CHOICE and available upon request; other commercially available surveys and questionnaires (e.g., those

	from the Educational Testing Service and/or the American College Testing Program).
	15. CHOICE staff; members of the National Task Force.
e) Develop new materials.	16. On-campus publication staff (writers, graphic artists, layout designers).
	17. College's Department of Journalism and/or Art.
	18. Linking Service consultants.
	19. Off-campus consultants who specialize in graphic art or design work.
f) Field test new materials.	20. Currently enrolled students
	21. Prospective college students in area high schools.
	22. High school guidance counselors.
	23. On-campus faculty, staff, and secretaries.
	24. The CHOICE checklist.
g) Revise materials.	25. On-campus publication staff.
	26. Linking Service consultants.
	27. Off-campus consultants--graphic artists and layout designers.
h) Produce and distribute materials	28. On-campus printing office.
	29. Off-campus printers.
	30. Campus mail.
	31. Admissions office, college bookstore, Public Relations Office, other offices that deal with prospective students and/or the larger public.

Step 6

Activity: Evaluate the process.	1. Those people that have been involved in the process. 2. On-campus staff who possess evaluation skills. 3. Off-campus evaluation consultants.

CONCLUSION

It is apparent that many resources may be needed to satisfy the objectives and achieve the goals of an information improvement project. This fact may discourage or divert some people from undertaking such a project. However, the experiences of Project CHOICE indicate that many of the resources needed can be easily found on campus. In addition, the external resources identified, notably the materials developed by CHOICE and the Linking Service Consultants, are available and inexpensive. If an institution sincerely desires to improve the information it provides to students, on-campus and off-campus resources are available to do so.

Part II. The CHOICE Linking Service

CHOICE believes that more comprehensive and accurate information for students is most likely to be fostered in higher education if colleges share their experiences. Thus, individuals who have been directly involved with better information projects on their own campuses are available to serve as consultants to colleges that may request CHOICE services in 1979-80. Consultants will be recommended by CHOICE from the pool of better information experts according to the needs and interests of the institution requesting assistance.

The goals of the Linking Service are, first, to make low-cost consulting services available to institutions that wish to review and improve the information they provide to students and, second, to establish a national network of trained "better information" consultants to facilitate the success of new campus-based information projects.

To participate in the Linking Service:

1. Discuss fully on your campus the likely benefits of undertaking a better information project.

2. Call Project CHOICE at (313)763-4775 to discuss your concerns, interests, information needs with a CHOICE staff member.

3. Project CHOICE will review its Linking Service files to locate the most appropriate persons for your consulting needs. CHOICE will then make the initial contact with possible consultants to determine their availability.

4. CHOICE will provide you with a resource manual containing information about the consultants and recommend persons for you to contact. You will choose the consultant who appears to be the one most appropriate for your needs.

5. You will make all of the necessary arrangements with the consultant regarding the visit to your campus. You should complete the "Consulting Agreement" after negotiation between you and the consultant. Forward the entire form to the consultant for his/her confirmation.

6. Your institution should arrange to pay the necessary travel and per diem expenses directly to the consultant. At the same time a check for the consultant's $100 per day honorarium should be sent to Project CHOICE.

7. With the assistance of your consultant, you will outline your information goals and objectives and will develop an action plan for implementing an information improvement project on your campus.

8. You will discuss with your consultant and the Project CHOICE staff any further consulting needs you may have.

9. When both you and the consultant are satisfied that the original consulting agreements have been fulfilled, Project CHOICE will disperse the honorarium to the consultant.

10. An evaluation form will be sent both to you and the consultant.

Institutions taking advantage of the Linking Service are encouraged to ensure that their better information project is carefully planned. In some cases, it may be desirable to contract for several days with one or more consultants. In addition to consulting on initial planning stages of the project, CHOICE recommends that institutions contract as needed for additional consulting days while the project is in progress and at least one day at the completion of the project. One half-day before the consultant's visit should be allowed for preparation time as well as an additional half-day at the completion of the consultant's visit to prepare any reports that may be necessary. With this arrangement one day of consulting would typically result in an institution paying a two-day honorarium ($200) to the consultant.

The Linking Service provides three major types of resources to institutions. The first consists of a group of consultants with broad general knowledge about the process of implementing an information improvement project. The second group of consultants are "specialists" on particular content areas such as costs and financial aid, graduates' employment, or student retention. The third group of consultants can advise on the methodological issues that may confront an institution during the process of collecting new data to share with prospective students. These consultants have experience in methods of data collection, questionnaire design, survey techniques, and interpreting and reporting data.

Examples of consulting topics include:

1. Development of action plan for producing better information

2. Providing improved information on:

    Costs and Financial Aid
    Prospects for admission
    Student completion rates
    Graduate outcomes
    College services and academic programs

3. Data gathering techniques

4. Questionnaire development

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Part IV. Questionnaires and Surveys: Some Examples

This section presents three questionnaires developed by CHOICE staff for use by colleges wishing to collect new information as a part of their information improvement activities. Portions of these questionnaires may be of use to you or to other individuals in your institution, should you choose to undertake a better information project.

The *Alumni Questionnaire* was used by five colleges and universities participating in CHOICE that wished to provide better descriptions of graduates' employment, their satisfaction with that employment, and their evaluation of their own educational experience at their college.

The *Student Involvement Questionnaire* collects information on the campus activities and relationships of currently enrolled students. It collects information that may be useful in characterizing the campus environment to describe it to prospective students. CHOICE used this questionnaire as part of a study of student attrition, trying to identify differences in the patterns of social and intellectual activity between students who subsequently remained in college and those who dropped out.

The Student Leaver Questionnaire was designed to be mailed directly to students who dropped out of the institution before graduation.

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI QUESTIONNAIRE

Please indicate your response to each question in the space provided in the right hand margin unless otherwise noted. All responses will remain anonymous. Please try to answer each item.

DEGREES AND EMPLOYMENT

1. What degree(s) did you receive from the American University?
   - ____ Bachelor's
   - ____ Master's (MA, MS)
   - ____ Professional Master's (MBA, MPA, MEd, etc.)
   - ____ PhD, EdD
   - ____ JD

2. In what year did you receive your last degree from the American University? . . . . ____

3. If you have obtained additional academic degree(s), use DEGREE CODES on page 5 and enter number(s) here . . . . ____
____
____

4. If you hope to obtain additional academic degrees, use DEGREE CODES on page 5 and enter number(s) here . . . . ____

Please answer the following questions in reference to the highest degree you received from the American Univ.

5. Major(s) (Use MAJOR CODES on page 5 and enter number(s) here) . . . . ____

6. What was your grade point average when you received your degree? . . . . ____

7. What was the first job you held after receiving your last degree from the American University? (Use OCCUPATIONAL TITLES CODES on page 5 and enter number here) . . . . ____

7a. Did you hold this same position before you received this degree? . . . . ____
1. yes 2. no

8. What is your current employment status?
1. Full-time employment 2. Part-time employment__hrs./week 3. Unemployed . . . . ____
(If unemployed, skip to item 15)

9. What is your present employment? (See OCCUPATIONAL TITLES CODES on page 5-6 and enter number here). . . . . ____

10. What type of employer do you have in your present job? (See TYPE OF EMPLOYER CODES on page 6 and enter number here) . . . . ____

11. How satisfied are you with your CURRENT employment?
1. extremely 2. very 3. somewhat 4. not at all . . . . ____

12. From CURRENT employment, please mark:
A. ____
B. ____

	A. Your OWN gross annual income	B. Gross annual FAMILY income (you plus spouse)
Less than $3,000	01	15
$3,000-$5,999	02	16
$6,000-$8,999	03	17
$9,000-$11,999	04	18
$12,000-$14,999	05	19
$15,000-$17,999	06	20
$18,000-$20,999	07	21
$21,000-$23,999	08	22
$24,000-$26,999	09	23
$27,000-$29,999	10	24
$30,000-$39,999	11	25
$40,000-$49,999	12	26
$50,000-$59,999	13	27
$60,000 and over	14	28

Please return to Dr. Nina Roscher, College of Arts & Sciences, The American University, Washington, D.C. 20016

13. Indicate which of the following statements apply in reference to your CURRENT employment. (Check all that apply)

My current employment offers future prospects for further advancement. ____
I supervise two or more people. ____
My educational experiences are well-utilized in my employment. ____
Most of my colleagues have college degrees. ____
Most of the time I design my own program of work. ____
I have policy-making responsibility. ____
I would like to remain in my current occupation for the foreseeable future. ____
I have sufficient status or prestige. ____
My employment fits my long-range goals. ____
I would like to remain with my current employer for the foreseeable future. ____
I have decision-making responsibility. ____
My skills are well-utilized in my employment. ____
During college I had a part-time or summer job related to my current employment. ____
During college I had a college-sponsored work experience related to my current employment. ____

COLLEGE PROGRAM -- The American University

14. For the items below use the following codes to indicate how helpful to you each was in acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to perform your current job.

1. extremely helpful 2. very helpful 3. somewhat helpful 4. not at all helpful 5. does not apply

Courses in major field . . . . ____
Cognate courses . . . . ____
Work experience/practicum while at the American University . . . . ____
Extracurricular activities while at the American University . . . . ____
Formal training program at your current job . . . . ____
General on-the-job training . . . . ____
Other (please specify) ________________________________ . . . . ____

15. For each item below, please rate your major program at the American Univ. using these codes:
1. extremely satisfactory 2. very satisfactory 3. somewhat satisfactory
4. not at all satisfactory 5. does not apply

Relevance to career goals . . . . ____
Academic advising and guidance . . . . ____
Inspiration and encouragement . . . . ____
Level of rigor and scholarship . . . . ____
Interaction with faculty . . . . ____
Flexibility/adaptability to student needs . . . . ____
Quality of instruction . . . . ____
Interaction with other students . . . . ____
Career planning and placement service . . . . ____
Overall, how satisfactory was the education you received at this institution? . . . . ____

16. If you were considering enrolling in this program today with the advantages of your present experience and knowledge, what are the chances that you would make the following changes?
1. excellent chance 2. good chance 3. some chance 4. no chance 5. does not apply

Change your specialization within your field . . . . ____
Change your major field . . . . ____
Not attend the American University but attend some other institution . . . . ____
Be more flexible in the range of career goals to which you aspire . . . . ____

Not enroll at all . . . . ____

Take different cognate or elective courses . . . . ____

Gain more work experience before enrolling . . . . ____

Do it all the same way . . . . ____

17. List the three factors which were the most important in your decision to enroll at this institution in the order of their importance to you. ____ ____ ____

1. The reputation of the program
2. The presence of particular faculty members
3. The descriptive literature you received from the institution
4. The influence of your parents
5. Because many of your friends came here
6. The influence of your guidance counselor
7. Location, because it was near to home
8. Location, because it was far enough away from home
9. The availability of financial aid
10. Other (specify) ____________________

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

For each of the following items please indicate in the first column how important the item is to you in judging your success in your profession, and indicate in the second column the extent to which you have achieved each item.

	Importance to you in judging success in your profession				Extent of your achievement in your profession			
	Extremely	Very	Somewhat	Not at All	Extensively	Much	Little	None
18. Salary increases	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
19. Chance to contribute to important decisions	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
20. Leadership activities in your field	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
21. Increased job responsibility and/or autonomy	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
22. An inner sense of knowing you are doing your work well	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
23. Recognition by students	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
24. Recognition by peers	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
25. Recognition by supervisors/ administrator	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
26. Approval from family and/or close friends	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
27. Opportunity to learn new things	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
28. Publication in journals and/or presentations at professional meetings	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
29. Other (please specify) ______________	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

30. How satisfied are you with the progress you have made in your professional career? . . . . ____

1. extremely 2. very 3. somewhat 4. not at all

31. If you sought a new position after receiving your degree which of the following were the three biggest problems you encountered in seeking a job: (Please list codes in order of their importance to you. Use codes listed below). ____ ____ ____

1. I kept the same job I had before receiving my degree
OR
MY PROBLEMS WERE:
2. Skill qualifications
3. Educational qualifications
4. Racial discrimination
5. Sex discrimination
6. A generally tight job market
7. A tight job market in my field
8. A job in same locality as spouse
9. Finding a job with desirable characteristics (salary, geographic location, setting, etc.)
10. Not knowing where to look
11. Not knowing what I want to do
12. Other (specify) ____________________

32. Regardless of your major at the American University, you may have developed certain abilities or skills during your study. For each of the following terms, please rate (A) the extent to which you possess the ability; (B) the extent to which the following abilities were developed as a result of pursuing your studies at this institution; (C) the extent to which the abilities are applied in your current job; and (D) extent to which your program should have given greater emphasis to this ability.

Please try to put an answer in each block.
Use the following codes for responding to each item:
(1) To a large extent
(2) To some extent
(3) To a small extent
(4) Not at all

SKILLS AND ABILITY AREAS:	Extent to which you possess ability	Extent to which ability was enhanced by study at this institution	Extent to which ability is applied in current employment	Extent to which your program should have given great emphasis to this ability
Writing effectively				
Speaking effectively				
Developing new approaches to problems				
Analyzing and evaluating ideas and presentations				
Using library and research facilities				
Supervising and leading				
Cooperating with a work team				
Persuading others to accept your ideas				
Dealing with the public				
Organizing time effectively				
Planning and organizing job related activities				
Working on long term projects				
Interpreting numerical data				
Using computers and analyzing computer printouts				
Communicating with others				
Resolving conflicts in work settings				

PERSONAL INFORMATION (this is optional but it would be helpful to us).

33. Sex 1. Male 2. Female . . . .

34. Race 1. Black-Non-Hispanic 2. Asian or Pacific Islander 3. American Indian or Alaskan Native 4. Hispanic ____

5. White-Non-Hispanic

35. Current age . . . . ____

FINAL COMMENTS (we do want to hear your comments so feel free to use additional pages if necessary.)

What were the two best aspects of your academic program for you?

What were the two worst aspects of your academic program for you?

Are there things you wish you had known about this university before enrolling in it that would have influenced your decision to come? Please explain.

Do you have any additional comments that would be helpful for the American University in planning for the future?

DEGREE CODES

1. Bachelor's
2. Master's (MA, MS)
3. Professional Master's (MBA, MPA, MEd, etc.)
4. PhD, EdD
5. JD

MAJORS

College of Arts and Sciences

1. Art
2. American Studies
3. Anthropology
4. Biology
5. Chemistry
6. Communication
7. Economics
8. Education (Elementary Ed., Secondary Ed., Counseling, Student Dev., Special Ed.)
9. History
10. Jewish Studies
11. Language
12. Literature
13. Mathematics
14. Performing Arts (Dance, Music, Music Ed., Arts Mgt.)
15. Philosophy & Religion
16. Physical Education
17. Physics
18. Psychology
19. Sociology

School of Business Administration

20. Accounting
21. Business Economics
22. Computer Systems
23. Finance
24. Marketing
25. Personnel
26. Urban Development

School of Nursing

27. Nursing

School of Justice

28. Administration of Justice

School of Government & Public Administration

29. Political Science
30. Urban Affairs
31. Public Administration

School of International Service

32. International Studies
33. International Communication
34. International Development

Center for Technology & Administration

35. Technology of Management

Washington College of Law

36. Law

Interdisciplinary Studies

37. Interdisciplinary studies

OCCUPATIONAL TITLES CODES

1. Unemployed(includes attending school)
2. Homemaker, full-time(not seeking paid employment)
3. Farming,Fishing,Forestry

Professional,Managerial,Administrative and Technical

4. Accountant
5. Actor,Actress
6. Artist
7. Administrative Assistant
8. Administrator, Business
9. Administrator, Education
10. Administrator, Government
11. Administrator,Hospital/Health Services
12. Advertising Manager
13. Bank Officer
14. Biological Scientist (not teaching)
15. Business Management Trainee
16. Buyer
17. Chemist (not teaching)
18. Clergy
19. Computer Programmer, Scientist, Analyst
20. Counselor, School or Guidance
21. Counselor, Career or Employment
22. Dentist
23. Economist (not teaching)
24. Editor
25. Engineer
26. Horticulturist
27. Interior Design/Decorator
28. Librarian
29. Lawyer
30. Legal Aid
31. Market Researchers
32. Mathematician/Statistician(not teaching)
33. Military Service(officer)
34. Music Director, Musician
35. Newspaper Reporter
36. Nurse, Registered
37. Occupational Therapist
38. Personnel
39. Public Relations/Publicity
40. Psychologist (not teaching)
41. Physician/Psychiatrist, etc.
42. Physicist (not teaching)
43. Research Assistant
44. Sales Manager
45. Sociologist (not teaching)
46. Social Worker
47. Teacher, Elementary
48. Teacher, High School
49. Teacher, College
50. Teacher, Special or Other
51. Translator
52. Urban Planner
53. Veterinarian
54. Writer

Clerical and Sales

55. Advertising Agent
56. Bank Teller
57. Bookkeeper
58. Computer Operator
59. File Clerk
60. Insurance Agent
61. Keypuncher
62. Mail Clerk
63. Messenger
64. Model
65. Receptionist
66. Real Estate Agent
67. Sales (wholesale and manufacturing)
68. Sales Clerk
69. Securities Sales
70. Secretary
71. Statistical Clerk
72. Stock Clerk
73. Survey Interviewer
74. Travel Agent
75. Typist

Service

76. Barber
77. Bartender
78. Beautician
79. Cook
80. Fire Fighter
81. Flight Attendant
82. Groundskeeper
83. Meatcutter (retail)
84. Nurse Aid
85. Police Officer
86. Private Household Worker
87. Teacher Aide
88. Tour Guide
89. Water, Waitress

Craftsmen/Operators/Trades

90. Assembler
91. Auto Mechanic
92. Auto Service Station Attendant
93. Baker
94. Bus Driver
95. Construction Worker
96. Dental Technician
97. Jeweler
98. Machine Operator
99. Machinist
100. Painter/Paper Hanger
101. Plumber
102. Radio/TV Repair
103. Taxi Driver
104. Truck Driver
105. Welder

TYPE OF EMPLOYER

Government

01. Federal
02. State
03. Local

Education

04. Elementary and Secondary
05. Postsecondary Education
06. Other ______________________________

Nonprofit Organizations

07. Hospital,Clinic,Health Care Center
08. Social Welfare
09. Church
10. Museum,art gallery,botanical garden,zoo
11. Other ______________________________

Business and Services

12. Agriculture or mining
13. Commerce,finance,insurance,real estate
14. Manufacturing or construction
15. Personal and business services
16. Retail or wholesale trade
17. Transportation or public utility
18. Other ______________________________

Self-Employed

19. Sole proprietor
20. Partnership

Other

21. Please specify ______________________

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your post office box number? (Please specify). ____________________

Instructions: The following items describe activities in which you may have participated during this academic year. For each item, please check or specify the appropriate response. Please respond to all items.

2. Approximately how many hours did you spend each week during this academic year preparing for class assignments? (Please specify). ________ 1:22-23
3. How many books, other than those assigned for class, did you read for your own pleasure or information during this academic year? (Please specify). ________ 1:24-25
4. Approximately how many athletic events did you attend during this academic year? (Please specify). ________ 1:26-27
5. Approximately how many on-campus parties did you attend each month during this academic year? (Please specify). ________ 1:28-29
6. Approximately how many times did you go out with friends for refreshments (e.g., a beer, a soft drink, a pizza, etc.) each month during this academic year? (Please specify). ________ 1:30-31
7. How many cultural events did you attend during this academic year (e.g., lecture, concert, plays)? (Please specify). ________ 1:32-33
8. What was your academic average (GPA) for the first semester/quarter? (Please specify). ________ 1:34-37
9. What do you expect your academic average (GPA) to be for this semester/quarter? (Please specify). ________ 1:38-41

During this academic year approximately how many times did you:

10. Have dinner or refreshments at a faculty members' home? ________ 1:42-43
11. Go out for refreshments with a faculty member? ________ 1:44-45
12. Have a meal on campus with a faculty member? ________ 1:46-47
13. Students often talk with a variety of people. Using the answer code listed below, please indicate about how many conversations you've had during this academic year with the people identified regarding the following topics (list only those conversations that were 10 minutes or more and list only those conversations with faculty that took place outside of class).

Answer Code for Question 13

0= Have Had no Conversations
1= One to Three Conversations
2= Four to Six Conversations
3= Seven to Nine Conversations
4= More than Nine Conversations

(Place a 0,1,2,3 or 4 in each response category for Question 13.)

Number of Conversations about:	Academic Advisor	Faculty (excluding Acad. Advisor)	Parents	
a. Educational plans, problems, or progress	___	___	___	1:48-50
b. Academic or intellectual issues	___	___	___	1:51-53
c. Informal, conversational matters only	___	___	___	1:54-56
d. Career plans or opportunities	___	___	___	1:57-59
e. A personal problem	___	___	___	1:60-62
f. A campus or social issue	___	___	___	1:63-65

over ——

14. For the following list of student activities, place a check mark in the box for those in which you participate. For those that you check, please indicate the approximate hours you participated each week during this academic year in the space to the right of the box.

a. Athletics - Intercollegiate	☐	____	1:66-68
b. Athletics - Intramural	☐	____	1:69-71
c. College Publications (e.g. Newspaper, year book)	☐	____	1:72-74
d. College Productions or Performances (e.g. theater, glee club, band)	☐	____	1:75-77
e. Fraternities, Sororities, Co-ops	☐	____	1:78-80
f. Professional or Departmental Clubs (e.g. Business Club, Economics Club, Debate Club)	☐	____	2:22-24
g. Hobbies or Social Clubs (e.g. Radio Club, Hiking Club, Dance Club)	☐	____	2:25-27
h. Religious Organizations (e.g. Newman Student Association, Christian Fellowship, Hillel House)	☐	____	2:28-30
i. Residence Hall Activities (e.g. Hall Council, Social activities, judicial board)	☐	____	2:31-33
j. Student Government	☐	____	2:34-36
k. Others - please specify:			
______________________		____	2:37-39
______________________		____	2:40-42
______________________		____	2:43-45

15. Students often talk with students about a variety of topics. Using the answer code listed below, please indicate about how many conversations you've had with students each month during this academic year regarding the following topics (list only those conversations that were 10 minutes or more).

Answer Code for Question 15

0= Have had no Conversations
1= One to Three Conversations
2= Four to Six Conversations
3= More than Six Conversations

(Place a 0,1,2, or 3 in each response category for question 15.)

Conversations about:	Number of conversations each month with students	
a. Educational plans, problems, or progress	____	2:46
b. Academic or intellectual issues	____	2:47
c. Informal, conversational matters only	____	2:48
d. Career plans or opportunities	____	2:49
e. A personal problem	____	2:50
f. A campus or social issue	____	2:51

16. Some colleges provide special programs (honors seminars, accelerated classes, tutorial programs, reading skills classes) for students who want to strengthen their academic skills. Please indicate the ones in which you participated during the first semester.

a. Honors seminar ____Yes ____No 2:52

b. Accelerated classes ____Yes ____No 2:53

c. Tutorial programs ____Yes ____No 2:54

d. Reading skills classes ____Yes ____No 2:55

e. Study skills classes ____Yes ____No 2:56

f. Career planning programs ____Yes ____No 2:57

g. Others - please specify ____________________ 2:58-59

____________________ 2:60-61

____

17. a) If you had a serious personal problem, is there a student friend on campus in whom you would confide? ____Yes ____No 2:62

b) Is there a faculty member in whom you would confide? ____Yes ____No 2:63

18. Is there a person at this college that you date on a regular basis? ____Yes ____No 2:64

19. Do you spend time with college friends over college vacations? ____Yes ____No 2:65

20. How often do you go out on dates each month? (Check one)

____ None; ____ Once; ____ Two or Three times; ____ More than Three;

____ Already Married 2:66

21. Of your 5 best friends, how many attend this college? (Please specify). ____________ 2:67

For the following items, check the Like *space if the item describes an activity or event that you would like, enjoy, or find more pleasant than unpleasant. Check the* Dislike *space if the item describes an activity or event that you would dislike, reject, or find more unpleasant than pleasant.*

		Like	Dislike	
22.	Setting difficult goals for myself.	___	___	2:68
23.	Having other people let me alone.	___	___	2:69
24.	Working for someone who will accept nothing less than the best that's in me.	___	___	2:70
25.	Going to the park or beach with a crowd.	___	___	2:71
26.	Setting higher standards for myself than anyone else.	___	___	2:72
27.	Leading an active social life.	___	___	2:73
28.	Competing with others for a prize or goal.	___	___	2:74
29.	Meeting a lot of people.	___	___	2:75
30.	Taking examinations.	___	___	2:76
31.	Belonging to a social club.	___	___	2:77
32.	Working on tasks so difficult I can hardly do them.	___	___	2:78

over →

For the following items, check the Like space if the item describes an activity or event that you would like, enjoy, or find more pleasant than unpleasant. Check the Dislike space if the item describes an activity or event that you would dislike, reject, or find more unpleasant than pleasant.

		Like	Dislike	
33.	Going to parties where I'm expected to mix with the whole crowd.	____	____	2:79
34.	Doing something very difficult in order to prove I can do it.	____	____	2:80
35.	Having lots of friends who come to stay with us for several days during the year.	____	____	3:22
36.	Choosing difficult tasks in preference to easy ones.	____	____	3:23
37.	Going to the park or beach only at times when no one else is likely to be there.	____	____	3:24
38.	Sacrificing everything else in order to achieve something outstanding.	____	____	3:25
39.	Going on a vacation to a place where there are lots of people.	____	____	3:26
40.	Picking out some hard task for myself and doing it.	____	____	3:27
41.	Inviting a lot of people home for a snack or party.	____	____	3:28

42. How important is it for you to graduate from college? (check one) 3:29

    a. extremely important ____
    b. very important ____
    c. somewhat important ____
    d. not at all important ____

43. How important is it that you graduate from this college? (check one) 3:30

    a. extremely important ____
    b. very important ____
    c. somewhat important ____
    d. not at all important ____

44. How sure are you that you made the right choice in attending this college? (check one) 3:31

    a. definitely right choice ____
    b. probably right choice ____
    c. not sure ____
    d. probably wrong choice ____
    e. definitely wrong choice ____

45. Will you return to this college next fall? (check one) 3:32

    a. definitely will return ____
    b. probably will return ____
    c. not sure ____
    d. probably will not return ____
    e. definitely will not return ____

46. Listed below are reasons why a student might not return to college next fall. If you answered c, d, or e to question 45, check those reasons why you might not return. (Check one answer for each reason).

		Major reason	Moderate reason	Minor reason	Not a reason	
Academic						
a. Low grades	a.	___	___	___	___	3:33
b. Found courses too difficult	b.	___	___	___	___	3:34
c. Inadequate study techniques or habits	c.	___	___	___	___	3:35
d. Needed a temporary break from studies	d.	___	___	___	___	3:36
e. Major or courses not available at this school	e.	___	___	___	___	3:37
f. Dissatisfaction with major department	f.	___	___	___	___	3:38
g. Unsure about my choice of major	g.	___	___	___	___	3:39
h. Course work not challenging	h.	___	___	___	___	3:40
Employment						
i. Scheduling conflict between job and studies	i.	___	___	___	___	3:41
j. Accepted a job	j.	___	___	___	___	3:42
k. Went into military service	k.	___	___	___	___	3:43
l. Couldn't find a job while at school	l.	___	___	___	___	3:44
Financial						
m. Not enough money to go to school	m.	___	___	___	___	3:45
n. Applied, but could not obtain financial aid	n.	___	___	___	___	3:46
o. Financial aid was not sufficient	o.	___	___	___	___	3:47
p. Child care too costly	p.	___	___	___	___	3:48
q. This school was too expensive	q.	___	___	___	___	3:49
Personal Circumstances						
r. Found study too time-consuming	r.	___	___	___	___	3:50
s. Home responsibilities were too great	s.	___	___	___	___	3:51
t. Illness, personal or family	t.	___	___	___	___	3:52
u. Personal problems	u.	___	___	___	___	3:53
v. Fulfilled my personal education goals	v.	___	___	___	___	3:54
w. Marital situation changed my educational plans	w.	___	___	___	___	3:55
x. Moved out of the area	x.	___	___	___	___	3:56
y. Child care not available	y.	___	___	___	___	3:57

47. How important were the following in your decision to attend college? (Please specify).

		extremely important	very important	somewhat important	not at all important	did not discuss or receive	
a. parents	a.	___	___	___	___	___	3:58
b. high school teachers	b.	___	___	___	___	___	3:59
c. high school or college friends	c.	___	___	___	___	___	3:60
d. college representatives	d.	___	___	___	___	___	3:61
e. relatives	e.	___	___	___	___	___	3:62
f. high school counselor	f.	___	___	___	___	___	3:63

over

48. How accurate in describing the college was the printed information you received from this college prior to enrolling? 3:64

a. extremely accurate ____ c. somewhat accurate ____ e. did not read it ____

b. very accurate ____ d. not at all accurate ____ f. did not receive it ____

49. How important was the printed informational material you received in your decision to attend this college? (check one) 3:65

a. extremely important ____ d. not at all important ____

b. very important ____ e. did not read it ____

c. somewhat important ____ f. did not receive it ____

Please specify:

50. Sex: ___ female ___ male 3:66

51. Age: 18-20 ___ 21-24 ___ 25-34 ___ 3:67

35-44 ___ 45-54 ___ 55 years or over ___

52. Your major/program is ____________________ 3:68-69

Check here if you have not selected a major program at this time: ___ 3:70

53. Your high school average was: 3:71

___ A; ___ B+; ___ B; ___ B-; ___ C+; ___ C; ___ C-

54. Please list your:

Father's occupation : ____________________ 3:72-73

Mother's occupation : ____________________ 3:74-75

55. *Place an "M" next to the highest degree attained by your mother and "F" next to the highest degree attained by your father.* 3:76-77

High school or less ____________

Associate Degree ____________

Bachelor's Degree ____________

Master's Degree ____________

Doctorate (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., D.B.A.) ____________

Professional Degree (i.e., DDS, MD, DVM, MDiv., JD, etc.) ____________

56. What is your current place of residence? (check one) 3:78

_____ On-campus residence hall _____ Fraternity-Sorority House _____ Co-op

_____ Off campus apartment _____ At home with parents _____ Own a home

57. Approximately how many weekends each month do you spend on-campus? (check one) 3:79

Four weekends ___ Three weekends ___ Two weekends ___

One weekend ___ NONE ___

STUDENT LEAVER QUESTIONNAIRE

For each of the items below, please check the response that best describes your situation.

1. How long were you enrolled before you left this school?

___ less than one term
___ one term, but less than one year
___ one year or more, but less than 2 years
___ two years or more, but less than 3 years
___ three years or more

2. Were you primarily a full-time (12 hours or more) or part-time student while you attended this school?

___ primarily full-time; ___ primarily part-time

3. What degree were you seeking when you enrolled in this institution?

___ I was not seeking a degree; only enrolled in selected courses
___ Associate degree
___ Bachelors degree
___ Other (specify) ____________________

4. When you enrolled here, what was the highest degree you hoped to obtain?

___ Associate degree
___ Bachelors degree
___ Masters degree
___ Doctorate (Ph.D.,ED.D,DBA,etc.)
___ Professional degree (M.D.,D.V.M.,DDS, JD,LLD,etc.)

5. How influential were each of the following in your decision to attend this college?

	extremely	very	somewhat	not at all
1. the reputation of the institution	___	___	___	___
2. availability of a particular program or major	___	___	___	___
3. the reputation of the faculty	___	___	___	___
4. the descriptive literature you received from the institution	___	___	___	___
5. your parents	___	___	___	___
6. because many of your friends came here	___	___	___	___
7. the guidance counselor in your high school	___	___	___	___
8. location, because it was near to home	___	___	___	___
9. location, because it was far enough away from home	___	___	___	___
10. the availability of financial aid	___	___	___	___
11. the athletic program	___	___	___	___
12. other (specify) ____________________	___	___	___	___
13. because other members of your family attended	___	___	___	___

6. How helpful was the information provided by the college in your decision to enroll?

___ extremely; ___ very; ___ somewhat; ___ not at all;

___ did not read; ___ did not receive information

7. At the time of entry, how strong was your desire to attend this institution?

___ extremely; ___ very; ___ somewhat; ___ not at all

8. At the time you enrolled, how strong was your desire to graduate from this institution?

___ extremely; ___ very; ___ somewhat; ___ not at all

9. How satisfied were you with each of the college services listed below? (If you never used a particular service, check the first column and do not rate the item)

	never used this service	very dissatisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	somewhat satisfied	very satisfied
a. Admissions Office Information	___	___	___	___	___
b. Registration	___	___	___	___	___
c. Financial Aid Office	___	___	___	___	___
d. Student Employment Office	___	___	___	___	___
e. Faculty Academic Advising	___	___	___	___	___
f. Nonfaculty Academic Advising	___	___	___	___	___
g. Counseling Center	___	___	___	___	___

	very satisfied	somewhat satisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	very dissatisfied	never used this service
h. Reading, Writing, Math Skills Improvement	___	___	___	___	___
i. Testing Services	___	___	___	___	___
j. Career Development/Placement Office	___	___	___	___	___
k. Cafeteria	___	___	___	___	___
l. Recreation and Athletic Facilities	___	___	___	___	___
m. Library	___	___	___	___	___
n. Health Center	___	___	___	___	___
o. Housing Facilities	___	___	___	___	___
p. Extra Curricular Programs	___	___	___	___	___

10. How satisfied are you with your experiences at this school in each of the following areas?

a. Your overall impression of general education courses	___	___	___	___	___
b. Your overall impression of courses in your major/program	___	___	___	___	___
c. The overall quality of instruction	___	___	___	___	___
d. Availability of courses offered that were of interest to you	___	___	___	___	___
e. The accessibility of instructors	___	___	___	___	___
f. Helpfulness of instructors in assisting you with career plans	___	___	___	___	___

11. What was your cumulative grade point average at the time you left this school? __________

12. Were you ever on academic probation while enrolled? (Check one)

___ Yes ___ No

13. When I applied this college was my __ first choice; __ second choice; __ third choice; __ other (specify) ____.

14. Please describe in your own words your reasons for leaving this school.

____

____

____

15. Listed below are reasons why a student might leave school. To what extent are these your reasons for leaving this school? (Check one answer for each reason)

		major reason	moderate reason	minor reason	not a reason
Academic					
a. Low grades	34-	___	___	___	___
b. Found courses too difficult	35-	___	___	___	___
c. Inadequate study techniques or habits	36-	___	___	___	___
d. Needed a temporary break from studies	37-	___	___	___	___
e. Major or courses not available at this school	38-	___	___	___	___
f. Dissatisfaction with major department	39-	___	___	___	___
g. Unsure about my choice of major	40-	___	___	___	___
h. Course work not challenging	41-	___	___	___	___
Employment					
i. Scheduling conflict between job and studies	42-	___	___	___	___
j. Accepted a job	43-	___	___	___	___
k. Went into military service	44-	___	___	___	___
l. Couldn't find a job while at school	45-	___	___	___	___

			major reason	moderate reas	minor reason	not a reason
Financial						
m.	Not enough money to go to school	46-	___	___	___	___
n.	Applied, but could not obtain financial aid	47-	___	___	___	___
o.	Financial aid was not sufficient	48-	___	___	___	___
p.	Child care too costly	49-	___	___	___	___
q.	This school was too expensive	50-	___	___	___	___
Personal Circumstances						
r.	Found study too time-consuming	51-	___	___	___	___
s.	Home responsibilities were too great	52-	___	___	___	___
t.	Illness, personal or family	53-	___	___	___	___
u.	Personal problems	54-	___	___	___	___
v.	Fulfilled my personal education goals	55-	___	___	___	___
w.	Marital situation changed my educational plans	56-	___	___	___	___
x.	Moved out of the area	57-	___	___	___	___
y.	Child care not available	58-	___	___	___	___

16. Please write in what your major/program was when you left this school.

____

Check here if you did not have a major/program ___

17. How helpful were the following in your arriving at a decision to leave the college?

		extremely helpful	very helpful	somewhat helpful	not helpful at all	did not discuss these people
a.	College friends	___	___	___	___	___
b.	Parents	___	___	___	___	___
c.	College Counselors	___	___	___	___	___
d.	Faculty Members	___	___	___	___	___
e.	College Administrators	___	___	___	___	___
f.	Other (please specify)					
	______________________	___	___	___	___	___
	______________________	___	___	___	___	___

18. What are your current educational plans? (check one)

- __ Have already re-enrolled at this school
- __ Plan to re-enroll at this school within six months
- __ Have already re-enrolled at another school
- __ Plan to re-enroll at another school within six months
- __ Have no plans to attend school within six months

19. Please check the answer that applies (optional, but it would help us analyze the results).

Sex: ___ Female ___ Male

20. Race/Ethnic Identification

- __ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- __ Asian or Pacific Islander
- __ Black
- __ Hispanic
- __ Caucasion/White
- __ Other (specify) ______________________

21. Your current age _______

22. Please write in the space below the one thing which, if changed for the better, would have encouraged you to stay at this school.

____

____

23. What was it that you wish you had known about this institution before coming to it, that would have influenced your decision to come? How would it have influenced your decision?

____

____

____

Part V

a. Colleges and Universities Participating in Project CHOICE

Institutions	Project Directors
American University Washington, DC 20016	Nina M. Roscher
Austin Community College 1600 N.W. 8 Avenue Austin, MN 55912	Roger W. Boughton
Ball State University Muncie, IN 47306	Richard D. Rowray
California State University at Long Beach 1250 Bellflower Long Beach, CA 90840	David Gray
Indiana State University at Evansville 8600 University Boulevard Evansville, IN 47715	M. Edward Jones
Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne 2101 Coliseum Boulevard, East Fort Wayne, IN 46805	Robert Barkhaus
Iona College 715 North Avenue New Rochelle, NY 10801	Lester Brailey
Joliet Junior College 1216 Houbolt Avenue Joliet, IL 60436	Walter Zaida
Catonsville Community College 800 South Rolling Road Catonsville, MD 21228	Shirley Perry
Essex Community College 7201 Rossville Boulevard Baltimore, MD 21237	Dennis E. Eckard
Ohio University Athens, OH 45701	James C. Walters
Piedmont Virginia Community College Route 6, Box 1A Charlottesville, VA 22901	Charles R. Dassance

Institutions	Project Director
Prairie State College P.O. Box 487 Chicago Heights, IL 60411	Joseph W. Sims
Ramapo College of New Jersey 505 Ramapo Valley Road Mahwah, NJ 07430	Timothy Robinson
St. Lawrence University Canton, NY 13617	Priscilla J. Angelo
Southside Virginia Community College John H. Daniel Campus Keysville, VA 23947	Ronald E. Mattox
University of Maryland: University College University Boulevard at Adelphi Road College Park, MD 20742	Jacques H. Dubois
University of Tennessee Knoxville, TN 37916	John J. McDow
University of South Dakota Vermillion, SD 57069	W. Michael Easton

b. Colleges and Universities that Participated in the National Task Force on Better Information for Student Choice

Institutions	Project Directors
Barat College Lake Forest, IL 60045	Theodore Marchese
Heald Business College Walnut Creek, CA 94596	Sherwood D. Burgess
Macomb County Community College Warren, MI 48093	Karl Wagner
Monroe Community College Rochester, NY 14623	R. Thomas Flynn
Morris Brown College Atlanta, GA 30314	Marie Metze
Mountain Empire Community College Big Stone Gap, VA 24219	Bonnie Elosser

Institutions	Project Directors
National Radio Institute Washington, DC 20016	David Dasenbrock
Portland State University Portland, OR 97207	Mary Kinnick
University of California-Irvine Irvine, CA 92664	John C. Hoy
University of California-Los Angeles Los Angeles, CA 90024	C. Robert Pace
University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign Urbana, IL 61801	Jane W. Loeb
Resource Agencies	
Associated Colleges of the Midwest Chicago, IL 60610	Patricia Wishart
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National Center for Higher Education Management Systems Boulder, CO 80302	Oscar Lenning
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Chairman:
Robert F. Corcoran
Education Commission of the States

VII. A CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING COLLEGE RECRUITMENT LITERATURE

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Russell H. Johnson,
Project CHOICE

John V. Griffith
Director of Admissions
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What criteria might a college use in examining the publications it sends to prospective students?

Despite the increased attention being given to this question, there is still no widespread consensus concerning what constitutes appropriate criteria. As educators review their informational literature, there is little to guide their judgment about what information is better and what is not.

This paper suggests criteria, incorporated in a checklist, on which a college's informational literature can be evaluated. The purpose of the checklist is to help educational institutions examine the printed materials they send to prospective students.

ISSUES IN BETTER INFORMATION

Three separate and rather different dimensions of information improvement efforts have recently been emphasized. Better information has been described in terms of:

1. Content. A catalog should provide relevant, accurate, and complete information so that students can make well-informed decisions.
2. Format. A catalog should be attractive, appealing, and effective in communicating the intended message. This is often the thrust of a "marketing approach" to catalog revision.
3. Process. Information in a catalog should emerge from a systematic process that emphasizes broad participation in reviewing existing literature in light of the claims and goals of the institution.

The emphasis of the attached checklist is content. Most of the literature advocating better information is presented in terms of what information should be available to the student. That literature forms the basis of our recommendations.

Although CHOICE is primarily concerned with the adequacy, accuracy, and relevance of the information provided, these factors cannot be totally divorced from format or process.

SOURCES OF CRITERIA

The criteria suggested on the attached checklist are drawn from four sources:

1. Federal regulations (and recommendations) implementing several different federal student assistance programs (e.g., Office of Education programs, Veteran's Administration programs). The Higher Education Amendments of 1976 include provisions for student consumer information based on what Congress believed should be available to students. Since then, the U.S. Office of Education has implemented a series of regulations that detail the specific information to be presented.*

2. Recommendations of Professional Associations. Professional associations have developed statements of principles and codes of institutional conduct that suggest certain types of information that should be available to students. Recently some of these associations have updated their codes of conduct to respond to current concerns. For example, see the "Statement of Principles of Good Practice" developed by the National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC).

3. Research Studies have identified information items that are important for prospective students to know. Much of this research was initiated and/or undertaken by the National Task Force for Better Information for Student Choice. Additionally, several studies have examined some broader issues of college literature (such as readability) and institutional policy (such as credit transfer policies) and provide recommendations for improvement.

4. The experience of Project CHOICE offers an additional source of criteria. CHOICE worked with 19 colleges and univer-

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*The use of criteria based on federal regulations does not imply that CHOICE endorses the regulations as helpful in student decision-making.

sities around the country that are revising all or parts of their institutional literature. Additionally, CHOICE operated a "better information" clearinghouse and supplied examples of college literature. These activities, particularly the first, provide a source of criteria grounded in actual institutional practice.

USING THE CHECKLIST

The checklist is divided into two sections. The first section refers to the general issues that are relevant to a college's document. For that reason, criteria in this section are of particular importance. The second set of criteria deals with specific content that should be available to prospective students. The second section is divided into groupings that correspond with the principal sections of many college catalogs. This clustering is useful when an institution is reviewing only selected parts of its materials.

Appropriate standards for performance on the general criteria (Part I) are not fixed. Issues of clarity, usability, and so on are often matters of judgment. Consequently, it may be beneficial to have several persons or groups (particularly users of the material) rate the printed materials on these criteria.

The criteria in Part II are different. The information specified by these items either is or is not provided in current materials. The recommended standard is that the information be provided. This determination can be made by one or two staff members working with the printed materials. If the information is provided, it should nevertheless be examined using the criteria in Part I. Each item might be considered in these terms:

Example	YES	NO	appropriate language	usability	format	truthfulness	clarity
21. Statement of transfer admissions requirements.	X	___					
	if yes →		___	___	___	___	___

After determining that a statement of "transfer admissions policy" is indeed provided, the statement itself is examined for the appropriateness of its language, truthfulness, and so on.

It is important to realize that these criteria of content (Part II) do not limit the medium or format in which an institution may wish to present its information. These criteria can apply to a filmstrip, newspaper advertisement, or videotape presentation as well as to a college catalog.

The purpose of the checklist is to help administrators or faculty identify the areas in which their institution can improve the information it presently provides to students. If the institution already supplies this information in clear, useful, and truthful ways, using appropriate format and language, it is already providing "better" information. If, however, there are areas of weakness, the institution may wish to reexamine its materials.

A CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING COLLEGE RECRUITMENT LITERATURE

PART I. GENERAL CRITERIA RELEVANT TO THE ENTIRE DOCUMENT

Instructions: The following items describe important characteristics of good information. Examine the printed materials your institution provides to prospective students and rate them on each of the following characteristics. You may also want to ask other persons or groups (especially those who may use the materials) to rate them.

	Excellent	Adequate	Needs Improvement
1. Appropriate language			
a. reading difficulty level ("readability")	___	___	___
b. avoids sexist and racist language	___	___	___
2. Useability			
a. adequate indexing of information	___	___	___
b. clear and logical organization of information	___	___	___
3. Format			
a. easily readable typeface	___	___	___
b. adequate white space	___	___	___
c. photographs honest in the message they communicate	___	___	___
4. Truthfulness and accuracy of information provided	___	___	___
5. Clarity of the information	___	___	___
6. Stated policy regarding access to information about the institution other than that contained in the document	___	___	___

PART II. SPECIFIC CRITERIA BY AREAS OF CONTENT

Instructions: The following items describe information that should be presented in the literature that a college sends to a prospective student. For each item, indicate whether or not the information indicated appears in the printed material. Information which does appear should still be evaluated according to the criteria listed in PART I. If you find that certain information is not provided, it may suggest areas that need revision.

Cost and Financial Aid

Does your institution provide a statement of:	YES	NO	Source Of Information	Page	Comment
7. Full cost of attendance	___	___		___	
8. Special fees applicable to particular areas of study (e.g., laboratory fees; art supplies)	___	___		___	
9. Refund policy	___	___		___	
10. Nonrefundable fees and charges	___	___		___	

	YES	NO	Source Of Information	Page	Comment
[illegible] The typical cost of books and supplies per term	___	___		___	
12. Significant anticipated increases in cost	___	___		___	
13. Availability of financial aid	___	___		___	
14. Procedures for applying for financial aid	___	___		___	
15. The typical types and amount of financial aid given to students at various levels of their college work (i.e., freshmen, sophomores, etc.)	___	___		___	
16. The typical amount of financial aid given to students at different family income levels	___	___		___	
17. Academic and other requirements a student must meet in order to remain eligible for financial aid	___	___		___	

Faculty and Academic Program

Does your institution provide a statement of:

18. The procedures for applying for admission	___	___		___	
19. The current admissions calendar	___	___		___	
20. The basis on which students are accepted or rejected for admission	___	___		___	
21. The probability that students with different academic records will be admitted	___	___		___	
22. The requirements as to secondary school and other pre-admission requirements	___	___		___	
23. A statement of transfer admissions requirements	___	___		___	
24. Detailed description of any special admission programs (e.g., early admission, early decision)	___	___		___	
25. Policies and regulations regarding credit for demonstrated skills, previous education, training and/or experience	___	___		___	
26. Data descriptive of the academic characteristics of currently enrolled students	___	___		___	
27. The names of programs or curricula into which entry may be limited by facilities, staff, or admissions requirements which differ significantly from those generally applicable	___	___		___	

Faculty and Academic Program (continued)	YES	NO	Source Of Information	Page	Comment
Does your institution provide:					
28. An accurate and current list of teaching staff with their credentials (highest degree earned and academic area)	___	___		___	
29. An accurate list of all courses actually offered, or all subject areas actually taught if separate courses do not exist	___	___		___	
30. A description of the educational content of each course or program	___	___		___	
31. The number of hours of instruction in each course or program	___	___		___	
32. The way classes are taught (lectures, seminars, independent student, self-instructional, laboratory and field work)	___	___		___	
33. The year in which each listed course or program was most recently taught	___	___		___	
34. An indication of when specific required courses will normally be taught	___	___		___	
35. Course or area requirements applicable to entering students	___	___		___	
36. When students must choose a specific field of study in order to graduate or complete the program on time	___	___		___	
37. The grading or evaluation system and special grading options, if any exist (e.g., pass-fail)	___	___		___	
38. The standards which the student must maintain to remain eligible for continued attendance at the institution or in a particular area of study	___	___		___	
39. The requirements for graduation or program completion	___	___		___	
40. A statement of degrees, diplomas, or certificates awarded upon graduation or program completion	___	___		___	
41. Significant anticipated changes in the institution's curricula or completion requirements	___	___		___	
42. Probable and/or possible limitations upon the ability of graduates to take licensing or other examinations for any occupation or profession for which training is offered	___	___		___	
43. Detailed description of any special programs available to a student's academic program (e.g., overseas study, remedial help)	___	___		___	

	YES	NO	Source Of Information	Page	Comment
44. Student/faculty ratio and average size of class at different levels of study (i.e., freshmen, sophomores, etc., as appropriate)	___	___		___	
45. The availability and extent of special academic assistance	___	___		___	
46. Credit given by other colleges for courses taken at this institution (transferability of course credit)	___	___		___	
47. Data regarding numbers and characteristics of students who drop out of this institution before program completion	___	___		___	
48. Data regarding types and rates of employment of students who graduate from this institution (by academic area, if appropriate)	___	___		___	

Facilities

Does your institution provide:

49. A description of the physical facilities of the institution as they are related to the academic program	___	___		___	
50. The special limitations of the facilities for physically handicapped students (e.g., availability of ramps and elevators in buildings)	___	___		___	
51. Availability and cost of campus housing or the availability of off-campus housing if campus housing is not provided or not sufficient	___	___		___	
52. Student ratings of the different types of housing	___	___		___	

Student Services and Student Life

Does your institution provide information on:

53. The availability and extent of general student services	___	___		___	
54. The student's description of the general atmosphere at this college	___	___		___	
55. Opportunities for participation in social and cultural activities	___	___		___	
56. Opportunities for participation in recreational activities	___	___		___	
57. Any special institutional rules pertaining to personal or social conduct (i.e., dormitory curfew hours, etc.)	___	___		___	

	YES	NO	Source of Information	Page	Comment
Accreditation					
Does your institution provide:					
58. A statement of the agency or agencies that have accredited the institution	___	___		___	
59. A statement of the agency or agencies that have accredited or licensed programs within the institution	___	___		___	
60. A statement of what that accreditation approval or licensing implies	___	___		___	
61. A clear distinction between institutional accreditation, institutional membership in professional organizations, specialized or professional program accreditation, state or federal agency course approval, and state licensing approval	___	___		___	
62. Any sanctions or limitations currently imposed on your institution for non-compliance with designated standards by any institutional or professional accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Commissioner of Education or the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation	___	___		___	
Institution Wide Criteria					
Does your institution clearly state:					
63. The specific goals and objectives of the institution	___	___		___	
64. The procedures by which students who believe they have been unfairly treated may pursue and appeal their grievances and the name and address of the individual to whom that appeal should be made	___	___		___	
65. Current enrollment of the institution	___	___		___	